

**Brooklyn Academy of Music**

Alan H. Fishman,  
Chairman of the Board

William I. Campbell,  
Vice Chairman of the Board

Adam E. Max,  
Vice Chairman of the Board

Katy Clark,  
President

Joseph V. Melillo,  
Executive Producer

# the loser

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House  
Sep 7, 9 & 10 at 7:30pm; Sep 11 at 3pm

Running time: approx. one hour, no intermission

Libretto, music, and stage direction  
by David Lang  
Adapted from the novel by Thomas Bernhard  
Translated from German by Jack Dawson

Conducted by **Karina Canellakis**  
Lighting design by **Jennifer Tipton**  
Set design by **Jim Findlay**  
Sound design by **Jody Elff**  
Costume design by **Suzanne Bocanegra**

Committed by BAM  
Produced by Bang on a Can

The 2016 Richard B. Fisher Next Wave Award honors  
David Lang and the production of *the loser*

Season Sponsor:

**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**

*The 2016 Richard B. Fisher Next Wave Award honors  
David Lang and the production of the loser.*

*Support for the Signature Artist Series provided by  
Howard Gilman Foundation.*

*Leadership support for opera at BAM provided  
by Aashish & Dinyar Devitre and  
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.*

*Major support for opera at BAM provided by  
The Francena T. Harrison Foundation Trust.*



KARINA CANELLAKIS



LISA DOWLING



ISABEL HAGEN



ROD GILFRY



CLARICE JENSEN



CONRAD TAO



OWEN WEAVER

#### PERFORMERS

**Rod Gilfry**, baritone

**Conrad Tao**, piano

**Karina Canellakis**, conductor

#### BANG ON A CAN OPERA

**Lisa Dowling**, double bass

**Isabel Hagen**, viola

**Clarice Jensen**, cello

**Owen Weaver**, percussion

Executive producer, Bang on a Can **Kenny Savelson**

Stage manager **Travis Blackwell**

*the loser was made possible by a generous grant from the MAP Fund, a program of Creative Capital, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and by BAM for the 2016 Next Wave Festival.*

"Suicide calculated well in advance, I thought, no spontaneous act of desperation."

So begins Thomas Bernhard's novel *The Loser*. The narrator, who is never named in the book, retells the story of his friend Wertheimer, who has just committed suicide, and in the process he reveals everything about himself. They both had been promising concert pianists in their youth, among the best in the world, but they had the misfortune of meeting each other as students in a master class of Horowitz, in which the young Glenn Gould had also been a participant. The knowledge that they were never going to be as great as Gould wrecked their lives forever.

The story is not at all about Gould, Horowitz, or classical music. On one level the novel is an intense tour-de-force of character development, as the narrator tells you more and more about himself and his world, with all the details revealed in no particular order. In its own confrontational and strangely beautiful way, however, it is also about perfectionism, hard work, optimism or lack of, how we justify our lives to ourselves, and how we learn to appreciate beauty and become alienated from it at the same time.

—David Lang

*THE LOSER* by Thomas Bernhard

Used by permission of SuhrkampVerlag AG, Berlin. Translated by Jack Dawson.

This translation used by permission of The Knopf Doubleday Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC

**DAVID LANG** (composer, librettist, director) Lang is one of America's most honored and performed composers. His score for Paolo Sorrentino's film *Youth* received Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations, among others. Other recent work includes *man made*, a concerto for So Percussion and orchestra, co-commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the BBC Symphony; the large orchestra work *mountain* for the Cincinnati Symphony; the opera *anatomy theater*, written in collaboration with visual artist Mark Dion, at Los Angeles Opera; and *the whisper opera* for International Contemporary Ensemble, which premiered at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and at the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. His most recent work at BAM was *love fail*, written for Anonymous 4, with stories by Lydia Davis and texts, music, and stage direction by Lang. In the words of *The New Yorker*, "With his winning of the Pulitzer Prize for *the little match girl passion* (one of the most original and moving scores of recent years), Lang, once a postminimalist enfant terrible, has solidified his standing as an American master." Lang is a professor of music composition at the Yale School of Music and is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York's legendary music festival Bang on a Can.

### **ROD GILFRY** (baritone)

The two-time Grammy nominee, singer, and actor, has performed in the world's music capitals, receiving acclaim for performances in opera, musicals, recitals, and cabaret. He has created nine leading roles in operas, and several more are planned for the near future. Recent appearances include: Edinburgh Festival (*Così fan tutte*), New York's Mostly Mozart Festival (*Così fan tutte*), San Francisco Symphony (*The Tempest*), Alabama Symphony (Beethoven's 9th Symphony), Vienna Volksoper (*Kismet*), New York City Opera/BAM (*Anna Nicole*), Aix-en-Provence (*Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*), Quebec City (*The Tempest*), Los Angeles Philharmonic (*Così fan tutte*), London Royal Opera Covent Garden (*Anna Nicole*), Zurich Opera (*Rote Laterne* world premiere), Metropolitan Opera (*The Merry Widow*), American Repertory Theater Boston (*Crossing* world premiere), Milwaukee Symphony (*Così fan tutte*). Recent recordings: Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, *Great Voices Sing John Denver*, Matson's *Cooperstown*, and Stucky's *August 4th, 1964*. Upcoming engagements: Edinburgh Festival Crossing, Glyndebourne

Festival (*Hamlet* world premiere), and Japan's Biwako Hall: *Das Rheingold*. Rod Gilfry is a USC Associate Professor of Vocal Arts at the Thornton School of Music. He earned his Master of Music Vocal Arts degree from USC in 1983.

### **CONRAD TAO** (piano)

Twenty-two-year-old Conrad Tao has appeared worldwide as a pianist and composer, and has been dubbed a musician of "probing intellect and open-hearted vision" by *The New York Times*, a "thoughtful and mature composer" by NPR, and "ferociously talented" by *Time Out New York*. His accolades and awards include being a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, a YoungArts gold medal-winner in music, a Gilmore Young Artist, and an Avery Fisher Career Grant-winner. Tao's career as composer has garnered eight consecutive ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards and the Carlos Surinach Prize from BMI. In 2013, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra premiered Tao's orchestral composition *The world is very different now*, commissioned in observance of the 50th anniversary of JFK's assassination and described by *The New York Times* as "shapely and powerful." In September 2015, the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia premiered his piano concerto *An Adjustment*, with Tao at the piano. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* declared the piece abundant in "compositional magic," a "most imaginative [integration of] spiritual post-Romanticism and 90s club music." A Warner Classics recording artist, Tao's first two albums *Voyages* and *Pictures* have been praised by NPR, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and more.

### **KARINA CANELLAKIS** (conductor)

Winner of the 2016 Sir George Solti Conducting Award, Karina Canellakis has rapidly gained international recognition as one of today's most dynamic and exciting young American conductors. She served for two seasons as assistant conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and concluded her tenure at the end of 2015/16. Canellakis' 2016/17 season features debuts with Swedish Radio Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lyon, the symphony orchestras of the cities of Birmingham, Trondheim, Kristiansand, Malmö, Toronto, Vancouver, Milwaukee, Albany, Jacksonville, and Toledo, the Florida Orchestra, and the Louisiana Philharmonic where she also appears as guest soloist. She conducts Verdi's Requiem at the Zurich Opera House, the premiere of David Lang's *the loser* at BAM, and

Peter Maxwell Davies' new and final opera *The Hogboon* with the Luxembourg Philharmonic. In addition, she returns to the Hong Kong Philharmonic and North Carolina Symphony. A virtuoso violinist, Canellakis was encouraged to pursue conducting by Sir Simon Rattle while a member of Berlin Philharmonic's Orchester-Akademie. She played regularly in both the Berlin Philharmonic and Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and has appeared as guest concertmaster of the Bergen Philharmonic in Norway. Canellakis received a 2015 Solti Foundation US Career Assistance Award and was the winner of the 2013 Taki Concordia Conducting Fellowship. She holds a Bachelor's degree in violin from the Curtis Institute of Music and a Master's degree in orchestral conducting from The Juilliard School.

### **JENNIFER TIPTON** (lighting design)

Jennifer Tipton is well known for her work in dance, theater, and opera. Her recent work in dance includes Liam Scarlett's *The Age of Anxiety* for the Royal Ballet, Alexei Ratmanský's *Shostakovich Trilogy* for San Francisco Ballet and American Ballet Theater, *DGV* for Pennsylvania Ballet, as well as Paul Taylor's *American Dreamer*. Her recent work in theater includes *The Testament of Mary* at London's Barbican Theater, *Rasheeda Speaking* at The New Group, *Cry, Trojans* for the Wooster Group, Richard Nelson's *The Apple Family Plays*, and most recently *Hungry* at New York's Public Theater. In opera, recent credits include *Il Trovatore* at Lyric Opera of Chicago, *Don Giovanni* directed by Daniel Witzke at Opera San Jose, and *L'elisir d'Amore* directed by Bartlett Sher and *Maria Stuarda* directed by Sir David McVicar at the Metropolitan Opera. Tipton teaches lighting at the Yale School of Drama. She received the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize (2001), Jerome Robbins Prize (2003), and the Mayor's Award for Arts and Culture in New York City (2004). In 2008 she was made a United States Artists "Gracie" Fellow and a MacArthur Fellow.

### **JIM FINDLAY** (set design)

Jim Findlay works across boundaries as a theater artist, visual artist, and filmmaker. His most recent work includes his original performances *Vine of the Dead* (2015), *Dream of the Red Chamber* (2014), and the direction and design of David Lang's opera *whisper* as well as the unreleased 3D film *Botanica*. His video installation in collaboration with Ralph Lemon,

*Meditation*, is in the permanent collection of the Walker Art Center. He was a founding member of the Collapsible Giraffe and in partnership with Radiohole helped run the mythical Collapsible Hole from 2000–13. In addition to his work as an independent artist, he maintains a long career as a collaborator with many theater, performance, and music artists including Daniel Fish, Aaron Landsman, the Wooster Group, Ridge Theater, Bang on a Can, Ralph Lemon, and Stew and Heidi Rodewald. His work has been seen at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, BAM, Arena Stage, A.R.T., and in more than 50 cities internationally. In 2015 he received the Foundation for Contemporary Art Artist Grant and his previous awards include three Obies, two Bessies, two Princess Grace Awards, Lortel and Hewes Awards, and residencies at Baryshnikov Arts Center, MacDowell, UCross, MASS MoCA and Mt. Tremper Arts.

### **JODY ELFF** (sound design)

Jody Elff is an audio engineer, sound artist, musician, and composer. Elff has had the pleasure of working in some of the most unusual musical and sonic environments imaginable. He has worked with Laurie Anderson, Yo-Yo Ma, Paul Winter, Hall & Oates, Paul Simon, and many others. In addition, Elff has mixed countless televised concert events, including NBC's *Peter Pan LIVE* and Pope Francis' recent visit to the 9/11 memorial museum. His work with sonic environments has led him to develop a series of sound art works presented at museums and galleries internationally. He was commissioned to create a sound art installation *Strata* which is permanently on display in Lyon, France. Elff is also the founder of Little Dog Live, providing high-quality live-streamed broadcasts of concert events at [littledoglive.com](http://littledoglive.com).

### **SUZANNE BOCANEGRA** (costume design)

Suzanne Bocanegra is an artist living and working in New York City. Bocanegra has made costumes and sets for Big Dance Theater, Sibyl Kempson's *Seven Daughters of Eve* Theater & Performance Co., and Pam Tanowitz Dance, among others. Her piece *When a Priest Marries a Witch, an Artist Lecture Starring Paul Lazar* premiered at the Museum of Modern Art in 2010 and travelled to the Wexner Center, The Chocolate Factory, Fusebox Festival, CounterCurrent Festival, and Abrons Arts Center, among others. *Bodycast, an Artist Lecture Starring Frances McDormand* premiered at

the Carnegie Museum and had its New York premiere in the 2013 Next Wave Festival at BAM. *Chromatic*, an evening-length piece developed and performed with Susan Marshall and Jason Trueting, premiered as part of ADI's season at The Kitchen in 2016. *Farmhouse Whorehouse, an Artist Lecture Starring Lili Taylor* will premiere at the CounterCurrent Festival in 2017. A major show of Bocanegra's work titled *I Write the Songs* opened at the Tang Museum in July 2010 and traveled to Site Santa Fe in 2011. A recipient of the Rome Prize, she has received grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Tiffany Foundation, Joan Mitchell Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, and a Smithsonian Artist Research Grant.

### **BANG ON A CAN OPERA (ENSEMBLE)**

#### **LISA DOWLING** (bass)

Lisa Dowling is an Australian bassist, guitaronista, composer, vocalist, and improviser whose work has been described as "Bjork-like and innovative" (*New York Times*) and "brusquely subtle or exquisitely dense" (*Innana Naked*). A multifaceted musician, Dowling has collaborated with composers, fashion designers, artists, dancers, rock bands, and has performed in everything from concert halls to warehouses. Most notably, Dowling spent the majority of 2015 and 2016 touring internationally and nationally with the Latin Grammy-nominated Mariachi Flor de Toloache, New York's first and only all female mariachi band, culminating in a performance on NPR'S Tiny Desk Series. As an educator she has been fortunate to work with the New York Philharmonic's Young Composers Program, Florida State University, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, and conduct workshops in remote primary schools across Alaska and Australia. She is a graduate of Stony Brook University (BA) and Manhattan School of Music (MM). She has also completed additional training at the Conservatoire de Paris on Viennese Violone, the Victorian College of the Arts (Australia), The New School, and with renowned French pedagogue, Francois Rabbath. Dowling released her debut electronic alternative pop album with Gold Bolus Records in May of 2015. Entitled *lullaby apocalypse* under the moniker kills to kisses, the album is a marriage of acoustic contemporary classical technics, looping artistry, electronica, trip-hop, and folk.

#### **ISABEL HAGEN** (viola)

Violist Isabel Hagen is an active chamber musician and an avid performer of new music. She has performed around the US with ensembles such as Alarm Will Sound, American Contemporary Music Ensemble (ACME), Ensemble Signal, and Wordless Music Orchestra. She has worked with various composers including Unsuk Chin, Michael Gordon, Hilda Paredes, Steve Reich, and Charles Wuorinen. Hagen has played in master classes given by Kim Kashkashian, Robert Mann, Robert Vernon, and Barbara Westphal, to name a few. A violist who enjoys crossing genres, Hagen has performed alongside Björk, Jonny Greenwood of Radiohead, and Medeski Martin & Wood. She holds Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from The Juilliard School where she studied with Heidi Castleman, Hsin-Yun Huang, and Masao Kawasaki. While at Juilliard, Hagen served as co-principal of the orchestra and performed with AXIOM and the New Juilliard Ensemble; the school's contemporary music groups. She has taken part in festivals such as Bang on a Can Summer Festival, Big Ears Festival, Ecstatic Music Festival, June in Buffalo, Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, Lucerne Festival Academy, Robert Mann String Quartet Institute, Sarasota Music Festival, and Tully Scope Festival. Hagen attended the pre-college division of The Juilliard School from 2004 to 2009, where she studied with Kenji Bunch and graduated with honors. A native New Yorker, she is also a stand-up comedian and performs around the city.

#### **CLARICE JENSEN** (cello)

New York-based cellist Clarice Jensen brings the same genuine excitement and commitment to performing music of any genre or style, from the solo cello suites of JS Bach, to new music by Elliott Carter or Steve Reich, to her many rock and experimental collaborations. She founded and leads ACME: American Contemporary Music Ensemble ("vital," "brilliant," "electrifying," *The New York Times*). She is skilled at improvising and creating original string arrangements. She has performed with pop and rock musicians including Paul McCartney, Nick Cave, The National, Grizzly Bear, Ra Ra Riot, Silversun Pickups, !!!, Owen Pallett, My Brightest Diamond (Shara Worden), Max Richter, Stars of the Lid, Dustin O'Halloran, Shudder to Think, and Jóhann Jóhannsson live in concert as well as on MTV Unplugged, Oxygen Network, *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *Late Night*



with Conan O'Brien, and *Saturday Night Live*. She has recorded with Arcade Fire, Tift Merritt, Sean Lennon, Ratatat, Hole, Tyondai Braxton, Doveman, Jónsi, !!!, Owen Pallett, Matmos, and can also be heard on Nico Muhly's *Speaks Volumes* album.

### **OWEN WEAVER** (percussion)

Through a combination of original music, improvisation, and collaboration with leading composers of his generation, percussionist Owen Weaver's "intensely focused" (*Gramophone*) performances combine the forces of rhythm, noise, beauty, and stasis while seeking the musical potential in everyday life. He uses recycled objects, homemade instruments, and electronic sounds to construct a kaleidoscopic sound world ranging from the visceral to the sublime, clangorous to hypnotic. Weaver has been featured in the NYC-based Wordless Music Series, MATA Interval Series, Fast Forward Austin, two Nonclassical Records SXSW official showcases, and National Public Radio's *All Songs Considered*. A diverse collaborator, he has performed in Europe, South America, and throughout the US with Mantra Percussion, Glenn Branca Ensemble, NEWSPEAK, Concert Black, and others including performances with *Conspire: A Company of Voices* for a PBS television special and Grammy-nominated album. A passionate educator, he is a teaching artist for both the West Side YMCA and the 92nd Street YMCA, and has taught at Yale, Cornell, CalArts, Texas Lutheran University, the University of Texas at Austin, the Hartt School, and Rikers Island Correctional Facility.

### **BANG ON A CAN** (producer)

Founded in 1987 by composers Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe, Bang on a Can has been creating an international community dedicated to innovative music, wherever it is found, and has grown from a one-day New York-based Marathon concert to a multi-faceted performing arts organization with a broad range of year-round international activities. Current projects include the annual Bang on a Can Marathon; The People's Commissioning Fund, a membership program to commission emerging composers; the Bang on a Can All-Stars, who tour to major festivals and concert venues around the world every year; recording projects; the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival—a professional development program for young composers and performers led

by today's pioneers of experimental music; Asphalt Orchestra, Bang on a Can's extreme street band that offers mobile performances re-contextualizing unusual music; Found Sound Nation, a new technology-based musical outreach program now partnering with the US State Department to create OneBeat, a revolutionary, post-political residency program that uses music to bridge the gulf between young American musicians and those from developing countries; cross-disciplinary collaborations and projects with DJs, visual artists, choreographers, filmmakers, and more. Each new program has evolved to answer specific challenges faced by today's musicians, composers, and audiences, in order to make innovative music widely accessible and wildly received. Bang on a Can's inventive and aggressive approach to programming and presentation has created a large and vibrant international audience made up of people of all ages who are rediscovering the value of contemporary music.

### **BANG ON A CAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Daniel Baldini, President, Jeffrey Bishop, Michael Gordon, Lynette Jaffe, Alan Kifferstein, Michael Kushner, David Lang, Raulee Marcus, Elizabeth Murrell, Robert A. Skirnick, Jane Stewart, Sandra Tait, Julia Wolfe, Adam Wolfensohn.

**Bang on a Can's** 2016 programs are made possible with generous lead support from Amphion Foundation, ASCAP and ASCAP Foundation, Atlantic Records, Daniel Baldini, Robert D. Bielecki Foundation, Bishop Fund, Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs, Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, Exploring the Arts, Randy Ezratty & Jo Ann Corkran, Jeremy Geffen, Howard Gilman Foundation, Jaffe Family Foundation, Alan Kifferstein & Joan Finkelstein, Michael Kushner & Carol Dauman, Herb Leventer, MAP Fund, MASS MoCA, Henry S. McNeil, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, Jeremy Mindich & Amy Smith, Elizabeth Murrell & Gary Haney, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts (with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature), Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Scopia Capital Management, Matthew Sirovich & Meredith Elson, Maria & Robert A. Skirnick, Jane & Dick Stewart, Trust for Mutual Understanding, US Department of State, Williamson Foundation for Music, Adam Wolfensohn & Jennifer Small, and Wolfensohn Family Foundation.

*Suicide calculated well in advance, I thought, no spontaneous act of desperation.*

## SCENE 1

Even Glenn Gould, our friend and the most important piano virtuoso of the century, only made it to the age of fifty-one, I thought to myself as I entered the inn. Now of course he didn't kill himself like Wertheimer, but died, as they say, a *natural death*. Exactly twenty-eight years ago we had studied with Horowitz and we (at least Wertheimer and I, but of course not Glenn Gould) learned more from Horowitz than during eight previous years at the Vienna Academy. Horowitz rendered all our professors null and void. But these dreadful teachers had been necessary to understand Horowitz. For two and a half months we locked ourselves in our rooms and worked day and night, insomnia had become a necessary state for us, during the night we worked through what Horowitz had taught us the day before. We ate almost nothing. Once our course with Horowitz was over it was clear that Glenn was already a better piano player than Horowitz himself, and from that moment on Glenn was the most important piano virtuoso in the world for me. Wertheimer and I were equally good, even Wertheimer always said, Glenn is the best, even if we didn't yet dare to say that he was *the best player of the century*. When Glenn went back to Canada we had actually lost our *Canadian friend*, we didn't think we'd ever see him again, he was so possessed by his art that we had to assume he couldn't continue in that state for very long and would soon die. But two years after we'd studied together Glenn came to the Salzburg Festival to play the *Goldberg Variations*, which two years previously he had practiced with us day and night. After the concert the papers wrote that *no pianist* had ever played the *Goldberg Variations* so artistically. Glenn never played a single note without humming, I thought, no other piano player ever had that habit. He spoke of his lung disease as if it were his second art. That we had the same illness at the same time and then always came down with it again, I thought, and in the end even Wertheimer got *our* illness. But Glenn didn't die from this lung disease, I thought. He was killed by the impasse he had *played* himself into for almost forty years, I thought. He never gave up the piano, I thought, of course not, whereas Wertheimer and I gave up the piano because we never attained

the inhuman state that Glenn attained, who by the way never escaped this inhuman state, who didn't even want to escape this inhuman state. Wertheimer had his *Bösendorfer* grand piano auctioned off, I gave away my *Steinway* one day to the nine-year-old daughter of a schoolteacher so as not to be tortured by it any longer. The teacher's child ruined my *Steinway* in the shortest period imaginable, I wasn't pained by this fact, on the contrary, I observed this cretinous destruction of my piano with perverse pleasure. Without my music, which from one day to the next I could no longer tolerate, I deteriorated. From one moment to the next I hated my piano, my own, couldn't bear to hear myself play again; I no longer wanted to *paw* at my instrument. So one day I visited the teacher to announce my gift to him, my *Steinway*, I'd heard his daughter was musically gifted, I said to him. The teacher accepted my gift *immediately*, I thought as I entered the inn. I hadn't believed in his daughter's talent for a minute; the children of country schoolteachers are always touted as having talent, but in truth they're not talented in anything. The teacher's daughter took my instrument, one of the very best, one of the rarest and therefore most sought after and therefore also most expensive pianos in the world, and in the shortest period imaginable destroyed it, rendered it worthless. But of course it was precisely this destruction process of my beloved *Steinway* that I had wanted. I will now devote myself to philosophical matters, I thought as I walked to the teacher's house, even though of course I didn't have the faintest idea what these philosophical matters might be. I am absolutely not a piano virtuoso, I said to myself, I am not an interpreter, I am not a reproducing artist. No artist at all. The depravity of my idea had appealed to me immediately. The whole time on my way to the teacher's I kept on saying these three words: *Absolutely no artist! Absolutely no artist! Absolutely no artist!* If I hadn't met Glenn Gould, I probably wouldn't have given up the piano and would have become a piano virtuoso and perhaps even one of the best piano virtuosos in the world, I thought in the inn. When we meet the very best, we have to give up, I thought.

## SCENE 2

Strangely enough I met Glenn on Monk's Mountain, my childhood mountain, which is also called Suicide Mountain, since it is especially suited for suicide and every week at least three

The Richard B.

# Fisher

## Next Wave Award



Behind great arts presenters are great supporters, and few of BAM's friends have deserved that title more than Richard B. Fisher (1936—2004). A visionary in both professional and philanthropic endeavors, Dick championed the creation of a strong endowment to enable BAM to continue presenting its signature groundbreaking programming, even in difficult times. As Chairman of the BAM Endowment Trust from 1992—2004, Dick shared financial expertise from years as president, chairman, and chairman emeritus of Morgan Stanley.

Dick's generosity throughout his life continued even after his passing in the form of a landmark bequest. To honor Dick's friendship to BAM and recognize the legacy of progressive arts presentations he helped

ensure in Brooklyn, BAM inaugurated the annual Richard B. Fisher Next Wave Award in 2006. Each year, members of the Fisher family help BAM select the artist that best exemplifies Dick's forward-thinking ethos and passion for the arts, using this opportunity to celebrate Richard B. Fisher in perpetuity. Past recipients have included Pina Bausch, Charles Mee, Bill T. Jones, Robert Wilson, Mark Morris, Kronos Quartet, Anne Bogart, Fiona Shaw, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, and James Thierrée.

The 2016 Richard B. Fisher Next Wave Award honors David Lang and the world premiere of his opera, *the loser*.

David Lang received the 2008 Pulitzer Prize in music for *the little match girl passion* and was nominated for a Golden Globe and Academy Award this year for his music for Paolo Sorrentino's film *Youth*. One of America's most honored composers, his recent works include *man made* for Sō Percussion and the Los Angeles Philharmonic; *death speaks* for Shara Worden, Bryce Dessner, Nico Muhly, and Owen Pallett; *writing on water* for the London Sinfonietta, with libretto and visuals by English filmmaker Peter Greenaway; *the difficulty of crossing a field*, a fully-staged opera for Kronos Quartet; and *love fail* with Anonymous 4 (2012 Next Wave). Lang's opera *anatomy theater* premieres at LA Opera this June and at the Prototype Festival in New York in January 2017. His recent work on BAM's stages has included *love fail* (2012); *Supernatural Wife* (2011); *Shelter* (2005); and *The New Yorkers* (2003). Lang is co-founder of Bang on a Can with composers Michael Gordon and Julia Wolfe.

The Richard B. Fisher Next Wave Award Ceremony will take place on stage prior to the opening night performance of the engagement. BAM Executive Producer Joseph V. Melillo will present the Fisher Award—a beautifully designed walking stick by Fort Greene sculptor/designer Chris Gullian, who drew his inspiration from Dick's interests and the architecture of BAM's Peter Jay Sharp Building—to David Lang.

Richard B. Fisher is also now permanently remembered with the latest addition to BAM's campus in downtown Brooklyn. In 2012, one of the culminating events of the BAM 150th anniversary celebration was the September 2012 opening of the BAM Richard B. Fisher Building at 321 Ashland Place—around the corner from BAM's flagship Peter Jay Sharp Building. The BAM Fisher is an intimate and versatile venue for emerging performers in dance, theater, and music, as well as the new home for BAM's education and community programs. Its roster of programs include the BAM Professional Development Program, an initiative designed to help Brooklyn artists increase institutional capacity, and new and expanded education programs that have helped to increase the total number of students being served.

The BAM Fisher's facilities include: (1) the Judith and Alan Fishman Space, a flexible performance venue; (2) the Rita K. Hillman Studio for rehearsal; (3) the Max Leavitt Theater Workshop for BAM education programs and early stage development of new artistic work; (4) the Peter Jay Sharp Lobby with exhibition space for Brooklyn visual artists; and (5) a roof terrace, including the Geraldine Stutz Gardens.



or four people throw themselves off it into the void. The prospective suicides ride the elevator inside the mountain to the top, take a few steps and hurl themselves down to the city below. Their smashed remains on the street have always fascinated me and I personally (like Wertheimer by the way!) have often climbed or ridden the elevator to the top of Monk's Mountain with the intention of hurling myself into the void, but I didn't throw myself off (nor did Wertheimer!). Several times I had already prepared myself to jump (like Wertheimer!) but didn't jump, like Wertheimer. I turned back. Of course many more people have turned back than have actually jumped, I thought. I met Glenn on Monk's Mountain. I spoke first, I said, *both of us are studying with Horowitz*. Yes, he answered.

### SCENE 3

It's not my way to sacrifice my existence to sentimentality. I burst into laughter and had the piano brought to the teacher's house and amused myself for days with my own laughter about the piano delivery, that's the truth, I laughed at my piano virtuoso career, which went up in smoke in a single moment. And probably this piano virtuoso career that I had suddenly tossed aside was a necessary part of my deterioration process, I thought while entering the inn. We try out all possible avenues and then abandon them, abruptly throw decades of work in the garbage can. Wertheimer was always slower, never as decisive in his decisions as I, he tossed his piano virtuosity in the garbage can years after me and, unlike me, he didn't get over it, never did, again and again I heard him bellyaching that he never should have stopped playing the piano, he should have continued, I was partly responsible, was always his model in important issues, in existential decisions, as he once put it, I thought as I entered the inn. Taking Horowitz's course was as deadly for me as it was for Wertheimer, for Glenn however it was a stroke of genius. Wertheimer and I, as far as our piano virtuosity and in fact music generally were concerned, weren't killed by Horowitz but by Glenn, I thought. Glenn destroyed our piano virtuosity at a time when we still firmly believed in our piano virtuosity. Who knows, if I hadn't gone to Horowitz, whether I wouldn't be a piano virtuoso today, one of those famous ones. Immediately I quashed that idea, for I detested virtuosity and its attendant features from the very beginning, I detested above all appearing before

the populace, I absolutely detested the applause, I couldn't stand it, for years I didn't know, is it the bad air in concert halls or the applause I can't stand, or both. For I absolutely detested the public and everything that had to do with this public and therefore I detested the virtuoso (and virtuosos) personally as well. And Glenn himself played in public only for two or three years, then he couldn't stand it anymore and stayed home, in his house in America. When we visited him for the last time he had already given up public concerts ten years before. We spent two and a half weeks in Glenn's house, which he had equipped with his own recording *studio*. *My dear loser*, Glenn greeted Wertheimer, with his Canadian-American coldbloodedness he always called him *the loser*, he called me quite dryly *the philosopher*, which didn't bother me. Wertheimer, *the loser*, was for Glenn always busy losing, constantly losing out, whereas Glenn noticed I had the word *philosopher* in my mouth at all times and probably with sickening regularity, and so quite naturally we were for him *the loser* and *the philosopher*, I said to myself upon entering the inn. The *loser* and the *philosopher* went to America to see Glenn the piano virtuoso again, for no other reason. Wertheimer and I loved New York right from the start. It's the most beautiful city in the world and it also has the best air, we repeated again and again, nowhere in the world have we breathed better air. Glenn confirmed what we sensed: New York is the only city in the world where a thinking person can breathe freely the minute he sets foot in it.

### SCENE 4

Glenn is the victor, we are the failures, I thought in the inn. Glenn put an end to his existence at the only true moment, I thought. And he didn't finish it off himself, that is by his own hand, as did Wertheimer, who had no other choice, who had to hang himself, I thought. Just as one could predict Glenn's end well in advance, so one could predict Wertheimer's end long in advance, I thought. Glenn is said to have suffered a fatal stroke in the middle of the Goldberg Variations. Wertheimer couldn't take Glenn's death. After Glenn's death he was ashamed to still be *alive*, to have outlived the genius so to speak, that fact martyred him his entire last year, as I know. For years I tormented myself with the question whether it was right to visit him in America. A pitiful question. At first Wertheimer didn't want

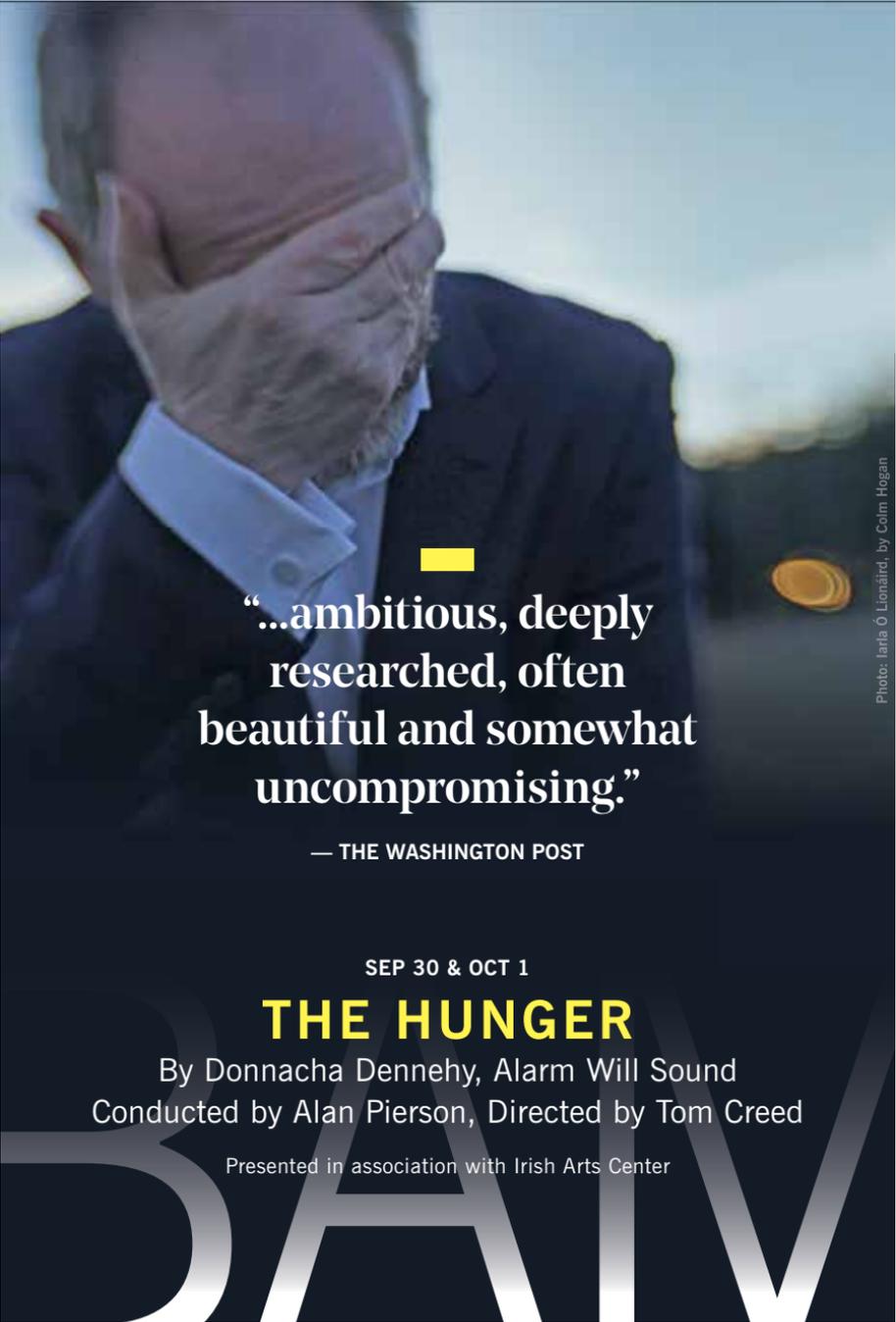
to, I finally talked him into it. Wertheimer's sister was against her brother visiting the world-famous Glenn Gould, whom she considered dangerous for him. Wertheimer finally prevailed over his sister and came with me to America and to Glenn. Over and over I kept telling myself, this is our last chance to see Glenn. I actually was expecting his death and I had absolutely wanted to see him again, hear him play, I thought as I stood in the inn and inhaled the inn's fetid aroma, which was all too familiar. I always stayed in this inn when I visited Wertheimer, since I couldn't stay with Wertheimer, he couldn't tolerate overnight guests. I've never spent the night at his house, it never would have occurred to me. For over two decades Wertheimer found refuge with his sister in one of the biggest and most luxurious apartments in Vienna. But finally his sister married a so-called industrialist from Switzerland and moved in with her husband. Of all places Switzerland and of all people a chemical-plant owner, as Wertheimer expressed it to me. A horrendous match. She left me in the lurch, blubbered Wertheimer over and over. In his suddenly empty apartment he appeared paralyzed, after his sister moved out he would sit for days in a chair without moving, then start running from room to room like the proverbial chicken, back and forth, until he finally holed himself up in his father's hunting lodge. After his parents' death he nonetheless lived with his sister and tyrannized this sister for twenty years, as I know, for years he kept her from having any contact with men and with society in general, umbrellaed her off so to speak, chained her to herself. But she broke loose and ditched him. How could she do this to me, he said to me, I thought. I've done everything for her, sacrificed myself for her, and now she's left me behind, just ditched me, runs after this nouveau riche character in Switzerland Wertheimer said, I thought in the inn. He worked himself up several times to the claim that he had given up his piano virtuosity for love of his sister, *I called it quits because of her*, sacrificed my career, he said, gave away everything that had meant anything to me. This was how he tried to lie his way out of his own desperation, I thought. He once told me quite seriously that he had dreamed of growing old with his sister in the apartment, *I'll grow old with her here, in these rooms*, he once told me. Things turned out differently, his sister slipped away from him, turned her back on him, perhaps at the very last possible moment, I thought.

## SCENE 5

Those who live in the country get idiotic in time, without noticing it, for a while they think it's original and good for their health, but life in the country is not original at all, for anyone who wasn't born in and for the country it shows a lack of taste and is only harmful to their health. The people who go walking in the country walk right into their own funeral in the country and at the very least they lead a grotesque existence which leads them first into idiocy, then into an absurd death. To recommend country life to a city person so that he can stay alive is a dirty internist's trick, I thought. All these people who leave the city for the country so they can live longer and healthier lives are only horrible specimens of human beings, I thought. But in the end Wertheimer was not just the victim of his internist but even more the victim of his conviction that his sister lived only to serve him. He actually said several times that his sister was born for him, to stay with him, to protect him so to speak. No one has disappointed me like my sister! he once exclaimed, I thought. He grew fatally accustomed to his sister, I thought. For twenty years he was able to chain his sister to him, with thousands, yes, hundreds of thousands of chains, then she broke loose from him and, as I believe, even married well, as they say. The already rich sister found herself a *stinking* rich Swiss husband. He could no longer tolerate the word sister, Wertheimer told me the last time I saw him. She didn't even send me a card, he said, I thought in the inn, looking around. She stole away from him in the night and left everything lying in the apartment, she didn't take a single thing with her, he said over and over. Although she promised she'd never leave me, never, he said, I thought.

## SCENE 6

I'm the survivor! Now I'm alone, I thought, since, to tell the truth, I only had two people in my life who gave it any meaning: Glenn and Wertheimer. Now Glenn and Wertheimer are dead and I have to come to terms with this fact. The inn struck me as rather shabby, like all inns in this region everything in it was dirty and the air, as they say, was so thick you could cut it with a knife. Everything about it was unappetizing. I could have long since called for the innkeeper, I knew her personally, but I didn't call. Wertheimer is reported to have slept



—

**“...ambitious, deeply  
researched, often  
beautiful and somewhat  
uncompromising.”**

— THE WASHINGTON POST

SEP 30 & OCT 1

## **THE HUNGER**

By Donnacha Dennehy, Alarm Will Sound  
Conducted by Alan Pierson, Directed by Tom Creed

Presented in association with Irish Arts Center

Photo: Iarla Ó Lionáird, by Colm Hogan

**2016 NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL**  
BAM.ORG/NEXTWAVE 718.636.4100

Season Sponsor:

**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**

with the innkeeper several times, naturally in her inn, not in his hunting lodge, I thought. The idea of wanting to see Wertheimer's hunting lodge after his death suddenly struck me as absurd, I smacked my forehead, although without actually doing it. I've got a lot of nerve, I thought. I suddenly felt like a grave-robbor with my plan to look at the hunting lodge and enter every room in the hunting lodge, leaving no stone unturned and developing my own theories about it. I actually had planned and still plan to look over the writings that Wertheimer may have left behind. Wertheimer often spoke of writings he had been working on over the years. A lot of nonsense, as Wertheimer put it, but he was also arrogant, which led me to assume that this nonsense might be rather valuable, would at least contain Wertheimerian thoughts worth preserving, collecting, saving, ordering, I thought, and already I could see an entire stack of notebooks (and notes) containing more or less mathematical, philosophical observations. It's possible that Wertheimer never told anyone but me about his writings (and notes), I thought, and tucked them away somewhere, so I owe it to him to dig out these notebooks and writings (and notes) and preserve them, no matter how difficult it proves to be. Glenn actually left nothing behind, Glenn didn't keep any kind of written record, I thought, Wertheimer on the contrary never stopped writing, for years, for decades. Above all I'll find this or that interesting observation about Glenn, I thought, at least something about the three of us, about our student years, about our teachers, about our development and about the development of the entire world, I thought as I stood in the inn and looked out the kitchen window, behind which however I could see nothing, for the windowpanes were black with filth.

## SCENE 7

Glenn died at the perfect moment, I thought, but Wertheimer didn't commit suicide at the perfect moment, whoever commits suicide never commits suicide at the perfect moment, whereas a so-called natural death always occurs at the perfect moment. Wertheimer had wanted to compete with Glenn, I thought, to show his sister, *to pay her back* for everything by hanging himself only a hundred steps from her house. He bought himself a train ticket and hanged himself a hundred steps in front of his sister's house. Wertheimer's calculation worked

perfectly: he thrust his sister into a lifelong guilt complex through the means and place of his suicide, I thought. That calculation is just like Wertheimer, I thought. But in doing so he made himself ridiculous, I thought. He had already left with the intention of hanging himself from a tree a hundred steps from his sister's house, I thought. Suicide calculated well in advance, I thought, no spontaneous act of desperation. I've always thought, one day I'll go to Wertheimer's funeral, of course I never knew when, only that it would happen, even though I never voiced this thought, above all not in Wertheimer's presence, whereas he, Wertheimer, very often told me that *he* would go *to my* funeral one day, that's what I was thinking about while waiting for the innkeeper. He wanted to publish a book, but it never came to that, for he kept changing his manuscript, changing it so often and to such an extent that nothing was left of the manuscript, for the change in his manuscript was nothing other than the complete deletion of the manuscript, of which finally nothing remained except the title, *The Loser*. From now on I have only the title, he said to me, it's better that way.

## SCENE 8

*The loser was a born loser*, I thought, *he has always been the loser* and if we observe the people around us carefully we notice that these people consist almost entirely of losers like him, I said to myself, of dead-end types like Wertheimer, whom Glenn Gould had pegged the moment he saw him as a dead-end type and *loser* and whom Glenn Gould had also first called the loser in his ruthless but thoroughly open Canadian-American manner, Glenn Gould had said out loud and without any embarrassment what the others also thought but never said out loud. We always have to deal with losers and dead-end types like him, I said to myself and lowered my head into the wind. Whereas the *Goldberg Variations* were composed for the sole purpose of helping an insomniac put up with the insomnia he had suffered from all his life, I thought, they killed Wertheimer. They were originally composed *to delight the soul* and almost two hundred and fifty years later they have killed a hopeless person, I thought. I knew the hunting lodge, my first impression was that nothing had changed. The woodsman Franz whom I knew, greeted me. He, Franz, feared that now, after the death of Wertheimer, of his provider, everything might change.

What he, Franz, particularly noticed, that is that Wertheimer had had a piano delivered from Salzburg in order to play it, certainly should have some meaning for me. A piano actually stood where no piano had stood for a decade, now there's a piano. I was interested in Wertheimer's notes, I had said to Franz, without hesitating Franz then led me up to the second floor. The piano was worth nothing. And it was, as I noticed right away, totally out of tune, an amateur's instrument through and through, I thought. I shut the cover immediately. I was interested in the notes, the slips of paper Wertheimer had written, I said to Franz, whether he could tell me where these notes were. He didn't know what notes I meant, said Franz, only then reporting the fact that Wertheimer, on the day he had ordered a piano for himself had burned entire stacks of paper in the so-called downstairs stove, that is the stove in the dining room. He, Franz, had helped his master with this task, for the stacks of notes were so large and heavy that Wertheimer hadn't been able to drag them downstairs alone. He had taken out hundreds and thousands of notes from all his drawers and closets and with his, Franz's, help had dragged them down to the dining room to burn the notes. When the notes were all burned, *all that writing*, as Franz expressed himself, he, Wertheimer, called and ordered the

piano and Franz distinctly recalled that during this telephone call kept insisting that they send *a completely worthless, a horribly untuned grand piano. A completely worthless instrument, a horribly untuned instrument*, Wertheimer is supposed to have repeated over and over on the phone, said Franz. A few hours later four people delivered the piano and put it in the former music room, said Franz. The deliverymen weren't out the door, said Franz, before Wertheimer sat down at the piano and began playing. It was awful, said Franz. He, Franz, had thought his master had lost his mind. I asked Franz to leave me alone in Wertheimer's room for a while and put on Glenn's *Goldberg Variations*, which I had seen lying on Wertheimer's record player, which was still open.

copyright © 2016 by red poppy music

*THE LOSER* by Thomas Bernard  
Used by Permission of SuhrkampVerlag AG,  
Berlin. Translated by Jack Dawson.

This translation used by permission of The Knopf  
Doubleday Group, a division of Penguin Random  
House LLC.