River of Fundament
River of Fundament

A film by Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler
Produced by Matthew Barney and Laurenz Foundation

BAM Harvey Theater
Feb 12—16 at 7pm
Approximate running time: five hours and 50 minutes, including two intermissions

Written and directed by Matthew Barney
Music written and directed by Jonathan Bepler
Director of photography Peter Strietmann
Production design Matthew D. Ryle
Edited by Katharine McQuerrey
Producer Mike Bellon

River of Fundament is presented worldwide on behalf of the artists by Manchester International Festival.

This presentation contains adult content.
“I believe in the practice and philosophy of what we have agreed to call magic, in what I must call the evocation of spirits, though I do not know what they are, in the power of creating magical illusions, in the visions of truth in the depths of the mind when the eyes are closed; and I believe...that the borders of our mind are ever shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy...and that our memories are part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.”

W. B. Yeats
Ideas of Good and Evil
Epigraph to Norman Mailer’s Ancient Evenings

RIVER OF FUNDAMENT

Set across the American landscape, the film River of Fundament is an epic story of regeneration and rebirth. Its multifaceted protagonist is revealed as three manifestations of an automobile in the exterior realm, and aspects of four human characters in the interior. Loosely based on the 1983 Norman Mailer novel Ancient Evenings, with an ancient Egyptian protagonist who sought reincarnation three times in the hope of achieving immortality, River of Fundament borrows its structure from Mailer’s text, corresponding to the seven stages the Egyptian soul undergoes in its journey toward new life. Conceived as a nontraditional opera written in collaboration with Jonathan Bepler, the film combines documentary footage of three live acts performed outdoors in Los Angeles, Detroit, and New York with live-action cinema largely set in a careful recreation of Mailer’s Brooklyn brownstone apartment, where the late author’s wake is underway.

Mailer’s protagonist, the nobleman Menenhetet I, uses magic and trickery to become reincarnated three times in the womb of his wife, who then becomes his mother. In each attempt, the undead Meni must cross the river of feces to attain new life, with the goal of changing his corporeal status from that of nobleman to pharaoh. In his third and final attempt to transform, Menenhetet III becomes stuck in the womb, failing to reincarnate. In Barney’s River of Fundament, “Norman” is recast in the role of the protagonist; he endures two rebirths, but fails in the third, in his attempt to attain a higher status among the ancestry of...
Great American Letters. The looming spirit of Hemingway haunts Norman as he transitions from one body to the next.

The film unfolds in three parts, each including one of the live acts that follow the narrative of the automobile. Aspects of the protagonist's will and desire for transformation are put into action in the outdoor productions of *REN* (Los Angeles, 2008), *KHU* (Detroit, 2010), and *BA* (New York City, 2013), involving the 1967 Chrysler Imperial from *Cremaster 3*, a 1979 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am and a 2001 Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor. Rivers and thoroughfares dominate the landscape, evoking the river of feces described in Mailer's novel. From the freeways of Los Angeles' car culture to the River Rouge and Detroit Rivers central to the automotive industry, and finally to New York City's East River—host to a funereal barge ferrying the Mailer apartment—manmade and natural arteries transport the protagonist on his journeys from death to rebirth.

Imagined as a lavish dinner party attended by New York's cultural literati, the wake takes place inside the Mailer apartment as it is ferried down the river. Intercut with scenes from the outdoor live acts, the story of Norman's three-time journey along the river of fundament parallels that of the automobile, and is equally populated by the incestuous characters belonging to the myth of Osiris. As the story of Norman's lives is recounted to him by an elder pharaoh, Norman's widow and wives contemplate the soul's journey as a series of recitatives, quoting passages from *Ancient Evenings*, as well as from American authors Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and William S. Burroughs.

Following the world premiere at BAM, *River of Fundament* will make its European premiere at the Bavarian State Opera, Munich, in March 2014 in conjunction with *River of Fundament*, an exhibition of sculpture and drawing at Munich's Haus der Kunst. Following the premiere, the film will tour for two years in proscenium theaters at international performance festivals. The tour is organized by the Manchester International Festival.
River of Fundament—Synopsis

Act I (one hr. 55 mins.)

In the Brooklyn Heights home of Norman Mailer’s family, a wake for the late author is in progress. The Widow of Norman (Joan La Barbara) greets friends and members of the New York City cultural and literary community. Music is performed throughout the house as guests, family, and the (unseen) undead interact. The spirit of Norman I (John Buffalo Mailer) emerges from the River of Feces, the mystical channel beneath the family brownstone through which the undead must pass. Norman I ascends the stairwell and enters his own wake. He is greeted by his Ka spirits (Matthew Barney and Aimee Mullins) who welcome him and accompany him through his visit.

In a flashback to a ritual held at a Chrysler dealership in Los Angeles, the spirit of Norman I is evoked in the form of a damaged 1967 Chrysler Imperial. A drum and bugle corps-led musical procession accompanies the Imperial to its final resting place in a showroom in the depths of the dealership.

Back at the wake in Brooklyn, Norman I, unable to communicate directly with his widow, makes the acquaintance of the reigning Pharaoh, Ptah-nem-hotep (Paul Giamatti), who envies Norman’s earlier experiences in the court of the great Pharaoh Usermare (Stephen Payne). The two men exchange commonalities, including their mutual reliance on sorcery (they confess to one another that both use human feces as a means to accumulate knowledge and power) and Ptah-Nem-Hotep reveals to Norman I that he believes himself to be a weak Pharaoh. Norman I greets Hathfertiti (Madyn G. Coakley) who has served him as a medium for his rebirth. He follows her into the bedroom and she leads him to a portal back to the River of Feces where his resurrection can take place.

—INTERMISSION (20 mins.)—

Act II (one hr. 40 mins.)

Norman II (Milford Graves) is born in the River of Feces in the basement of the brownstone. He emerges as an older, shamanistic sorcerer in his prime. Hathfertiti (Maggie Gyllenhaal), now an adult, welcomes Norman II into the house. In the parlor, the wake continues but the mood has turned darker; the guests are thinning out and the
energy is more inebriant, less formal.

In a flashback to a ritual held in the industrial district in Detroit, the spirit of Norman II is visualized as a gold 1979 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am. The myth of Isis and Osiris is reenacted by the Ka spirits of Norman in the double roles of Isis and Osiris (Aimee Mullins and Matthew Barney). Set (Eugene Perry and Herbert Perry) takes control of Osiris, locking him into the Trans Am and driving him to his first death in the Detroit River.

As the wake continues to slip into darkness, Nephthys (Jennie Knaggs) and Set, mythologically connected as estranged partners, carry out their domestic conflict. Drunken singers tell the story of the Egyptian Gods. In Detroit, a police investigation led by Isis and her sister Nephthys recovers the automotive body of Osiris from the River Rouge. The sisters resurrect Osiris' sexual organ and Isis becomes pregnant. Set is enraged and seizes the Chrysler Imperial body of Osiris, cutting the car into 14 pieces, leading to a second death. Imprisoned in the back of a Crown Victoria, Isis watches helplessly as the dismembered Imperial is fed into a massive furnace. The gates of the furnace open and the molten body of Osiris is resurrected as a massive iron Djed pillar.

—INTERMISSION (20 mins.)—

**Act III** (one hr. 36 mins.)

The 1979 Trans Am resurfaces in an industrial canal in New York City. In the back seat Isis delivers Osiris' son Horus, who emerges as a young falcon.

At the Mailer House, the great Pharaoh Usermare returns to a nearly empty wake, void of guests. He is met by Hathfertiti, who reveals that she is his daughter. Usermare is disappointed that Hathfertiti has spent her life enabling Norman, a mortal, in his quest for everlasting life. Hathfertiti rejects her father, defending her belief in magic and her dedication to Norman's mysticism. Norman II has taken rest in the River of Feces; knowing he must soon transform into a new body, he prepares to return to Hathfertiti.

At a nearby taxi garage in Queens, New York, the spirit of Norman III is embodied as a 2001 Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor. In the service station, parts of the Crown Victoria are gilded in preparation for the coronation of a new king.

In a flashback to a ritual at a drydock at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Horus (Brennan Hall) and Set vie for the crown. The drydock is filled with exuberant young Brooklynites and the arena is set for an epic bout. Simultaneous battles ensue at the taxi garage between two mechanics, and between the garage manager and her lover. Back at the Mailer house, Usermare holds court as Horus and Set are judged by the Council of the Gods; both Horus and Set feel that they have won the fight. As the verdict draws near, Isis intervenes, enabling her son to take the crown.

Hathfertiti (Ellen Burstyn) has grown older, having since sent Norman II through the portal towards his resurrection. She is now nearing the end of her life. Usermare pleads with Hathfertiti to abandon Norman and embrace her royal inheritance before she passes. Hathfertiti again rejects Usermare, declaring her allegiance to the energy of the earth and the pursuit of magic. Hathfertiti returns to the bedroom and falls into a deep and final sleep. Usermare, destroyed by his daughter’s rejection, commits a spiritual suicide, severing his ties to his family and to his past.

In the upper floors of the Mailer House, Norman III (Chief Dave Beautiful Bald Eagle) has emerged. Without Hathfertiti he is lost. After a brief term, he attempts to reenter the portal, where he becomes trapped, ending the lineage of Norman. Without their charge, the Ka spirits of Norman return to the River of Feces.

Act III comes to a close in Idaho's Sawtooth Mountain Range, in the depths of Redfish Lake, near the cabin of Ernest Hemingway, where the sockeye salmon make their annual journey from the Pacific Ocean in search of their natal spawning grounds.
Horus (Brennan Hall)
Arias of boiling blood bookend the Twin striding on steel mill scabs, cables and girders, trilling: *Down the septic river, the logs did roll,* to the tune of dinner horns, a Gabriel’s horn, which will never come. Sawing across unpolished surfaces, this homely tune is buoyed by sweet forgetfulness, a brother Casavant organ, that’s pushed to swell, pulled for mixture and principle, for Great Unison Solo. Aware of another, a shadow, some glow, the Twin thumbs a vertical cable and ears remote rusty trombones in the Horse Hoof Gum Factory’s cellar, where viola and tambourine jingles are Midwestern assembly line soldered together, ground-level, to sing loops and cuts and chords without middle, ending before the jangled duration can begin. Near Hog Island, the ABCs of axes are absorbed, the four-four Baroque skinning chants, Cro-Magnon. As a passing Tug’s awkward chord soils the day but cheers the far-off night with electric fanfare, the Twin croaks up a muddy tone, then another, deeper, and wet sledge drudges up into the range of pleasure before the cutting up of the manifold. You see where this is going, we see where this wants to go, always turning to answer, a fanfare once called. To the excitement of brasses, horn and river reeds soaked with saliva and bile bend to anglers’ bubbling, lines anchored with frontal lobes, and mouthpieces exhale past crime and suburban gates, trampolines and 18 holes. They forgot to investigate what happened, but it will not be let go. At the mill, nearer, furnaces press out upon the walls while workers wearing dust masks, small organs, heat metal to melting, breathe in chords for the pour. Oxygen jets increase the heat, injected air pressure lights up the system and gravity’s reckless sonata, nearer, extends into the hollow, vibrating everything touched at a pitch below hearing, beyond the perception of those long since outworn. This rugged sound pressure continues, deeper, into the rebar termite tomb of steel shavings, progressing on piano wires, infiltrating the rusty coke oven frames above to make them sing a last passage before crumbling into the dust of ancient burial mounds. Lumbering on girders, the Twin lingers on a serpentine ghost trail, on the shit river; farts into his bugle. The air chokes on the putrid skyline and the Twin bolt anchors a reinforced cord, ears the tree trunk reed in his belly, eyes an overhead wrecking ball-made xylophone. Quivering, the Twin’s mouth opens, and infinite surface, boiling blood, pours forth—then the logs begin to roll.

—Jonathan Bepler and Shane Anderson
Wake Guests: DAVID AMRAM, IRAN BARKLEY, SUZANNE BERTISH, DICK CAVETT, STEVE DALACHINSKI, CLARISSA DALRYMPLIE, MARTI DOMINATION, JEFFREY EUGENIDES, TOMMY GALLAGHER, GAIL GERBER, FRAN LEBOWITZ, CINQUÉ LEE, LARRY HOLMES, DETECTIVE BILL MAJESKI, JONAS MEKAS, ADRIANNA NICOLE, DE’QUAN PURDY, SALMAN RUSHDIE, LUC SANTE, LAWRENCE SCHILLER, RICHARD STRATTON, JAMES TOBACK, MR. TWINKLE, ALICE WEINER, LAWRENCE WEINER

The Wake Ensemble: Sopranos: KJERSTI KVELI, GELSEY BELL, MEGAN SCHUBERT
Harp: ZEENA PARKINS; Ukulele: MICK BARR; Trumpet: AXEL DÖRNER; Trombone: ART BARON; Organ: DR. LONNIE SMITH; Percussion: JEFF BERMAN; Strings: FLUX QUARTET (TOM CHIU, CONRAD HARRIS, MAX MANDEL, FELIX FAN)

Grill Cook: PAOLO HENRI D. PAGUNTALAN
Assistants to Ptah-Nem-Hotep: KAT DELPH, RACHEL WOLSKI
Teenage Beatboxer: RYAN ROBINSON
Queens and Eunuchs: PETER BADALAMENTI, ELEANOR BAUER, EKATERINA SKNARINA, BOBBI STARR, DANNY WYLDE
Mystic River Singers: KENNY MERRICK, LAUREN MERRICK, CHAD BENEDICT, CRAIG MERRICK, TYSON MERRICK, CHRIS NEWELL, WAYAHSTI RICHARDSON
The Council of Hemingways: KEVIN MCGUIRE, RICHARD FAULK, GREG PURSINO, MIKE WILSON

Kidsroom Ensemble: ARTIE CARPENTER, OCEAN ELIZABETH CURRIER, LUCA LODEWICK, THEO LODEWICK, SAM NIVOLA, SYDNEY SWIHART, MORGAN SWIHART, ALEXA SWINTON
Step Team: LINDA DIXON, TASHA EVANS, SADARA HUNT, SHAMANIA LAURENCE, JASMINE RAMOS, VERONICA RIVERA, SABRIE RODRIGUEZ, DANIELLE ROSARIO, MARILYN R. SOLIS

Bartender: DAVID GRIMM
Prep Cook: FRANCISCO PAEZ
Fry Cook: HECTOR TECAXCO
Khepera: MOUSE
Hunter: ED MULICK
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Name</th>
<th>Actor Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norman III</td>
<td>CHIEF DAVE BEAUTIFUL BALD EAGLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norman II</td>
<td>MILFORD GRAVES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norman I</td>
<td>JOHN BUFFALO MAILER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hathfertiti</td>
<td>ELLEN BURSTYN</td>
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<td>MAGGIE GYLLENHAAL</td>
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<td>Hathfertiti</td>
<td>MADYN G. COAKLEY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ptah-Nem-Hotep</td>
<td>PAUL GIAMATTI</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Widow of Norman</td>
<td>JOAN LA BARBARA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ka of Norman / Isis</td>
<td>AIMEE MULLINS</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Ka of Norman / Osiris: James Lee Byars</td>
<td>MATTHEW BARNEY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Usermare</td>
<td>STEPHEN PAYNE</td>
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<td>Nephthys</td>
<td>JENNIE KNAGGS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set</td>
<td>HERBERT PERRY and EUGENE PERRY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horus</td>
<td>BRENNAN HALL</td>
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<td>Lieutenant Worden</td>
<td>SHARA WORDEN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eulogist</td>
<td>ELAINE STRITCH</td>
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<td>Ranchera Singer</td>
<td>LILA DOWNS</td>
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<td>Priest / REN Manager</td>
<td>JERRY GILES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Chef / Day Labor Boss</td>
<td>LUIS ALVAREZ Y ALVAREZ</td>
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<td>Singing Wake Guests</td>
<td>SIDSEL ENDRESSEN, PHIL MINTON, DEBORAH HARRY</td>
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<td>Slam Poet</td>
<td>GEORGE STONEFISH</td>
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<td>R&amp;B Singer</td>
<td>TERRELL HOWARD</td>
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<td>The Ka of the Ka of Norman</td>
<td>MICHAELA DENNIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honeyball</td>
<td>MILICA NIKCEVIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blues Singer</td>
<td>BELITA WOODS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garage Manager</td>
<td>BOBBI STARR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garage Manager’s Lover</td>
<td>TAYLOR STARR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting Mechanics</td>
<td>MAGNO GAMA, PABLO SILVA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CINEMATOGRAPHY

Peter Strietmann
John Chater
Wolfgang Held
Claudia Raschke-Robinson

ADDITIONAL CINEMATOGRAPHY
Ryan Samul
Ahmet Sesigurgil
Christopher Seguine

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Christopher Seguine

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ADDITIoNAL FIRST ASSISTANT CAMERA

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George Tur

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Stuart C. Deutsch, C.A.S.

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SECOND BOOM OPERATOR

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BEST BOY GRIP

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KEY HAIR AND MAKE-UP

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WIG MAKER

J. Jared Janas

WIG STYLIST

Elias Aguirre

MAKE-UP ASSISTANTS

Jen Myles, Imane Fiocchi
Mykel Renner, Sandra Schneider, Elsa Canedo, Mordechay Alvov, Christine Herbeck

COSTUME DESIGN BY

Anna Maria Dıaz-Balart

WARDROBE SUPERVISOR

Yasmin Reshamwala

WARDROBE ASSISTANTS

Nelly Zagury, Kate Luftus O’Brien, Helen Andris, Samantha Bates, Michelle Walquist, Kate Weigel, Ellery Bakker

LITTLE QUEENS COSTUMES

Three as Four

KA OF NORMAN’S COSTUMES

Narciso Rodriguez
Linda LaBelle

PROPMASTER / LEAD MAN

Gregg Belon

PROPMASTER

Lauren Nikroz

SPECIAL FX ASSISTANTS

Greg Pikulko, Brian Spears

CASTING BY

Susan Shopmaker

STEP TEAM CHOREOGRAPHY

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ASSISTANT TO PRODUCER

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MUSIC ADMINISTRATION

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MUSIC PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR

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REPETITEUR AND SCORE PREPARATION

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MUSIC ASSISTANT

Margaret Fitzpatrick

KEY PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Darryl Prevost

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Daniel Lugo, Stephen Prevost, Kyle Parsons, Owen O’Leary, Aurora Aspen, Kate Lawerson, Parker Jessup, Tingting Wei, Marko Markovic, Gabriel Resmini, Jordan Boxer, Eri Holstein

CAMERA PA

Kyle Parsons

CRAFT SERVICE PA

Jon Konkol

BODY DOUBLES

Jefferson Bare, Richie Calhoun, Blanche Cauvin, Mike Landry, Danny Ono, DeQuan Pondy, Ekatarina Skaarina

STUNT DOUBLE

Samuel Elias

STILL PHOTOGRAPHY

David Regev
Ari Marcopoulos
Keith Riley

TAXIDERMY

Frank Zitz

ALLIGATOR HANDLER

Urbanzarzan

IBIS WRangler

Glen Grisco

TECHNO CRANE PROVIDED BY

Monster Remotes

HELICOPTER

Al Cerullo, HoverViews

LEGAL

Stout, Thomas & Johnson

ACCOUNTANT

Edward Greenberg, CPA

PRODUCTION INSURANCE

Ellen Ross for Wells Fargo Insurance Services

WITH THANKS TO

Ross Simonini
Hilton Als
Ari Marcopoulos
Jack Lane
Nicholas Williams
Arden Gill
John Gill
Julina Tatlock
Peter Kurland
Courtney Kivowitz
Fred Hayes
Lou Lunte
Caroline Clawson
Beth VanGelder
Michael Mailer & Maggie Mailer
Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game
Nature Conservancy

Crew

Director of Photography

PETER STRIETMANN

Production Design

MATTHEW D. RYLE

Editor

KATHARINE McQUERREY

Producer

MIKE BEllON

Additional Dialogue Written and Adapted by

DAVID GRIMM

Assistant Director

SARAH GYLENSTIERNA

Co-Producer

BLAKE ASHMAN-KIPERVASER

Live Performance Dramaturgy

TONY GERBER

Production Design Team

KANOYA BAYS, JADE ARCHULETA-GANS,
MICHAEL BRANNING, MIKE KOLLER

Special Make-Up Effects

KEITH EDMIER and JOSH TURI

Special Make-Up Effects: REN

GABE BARTALOS

KHU Foundry Design and Operation

CASEY WESTBROOK

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CHRIS WINGET

Sound Design

DAVID PATRER

Visual Effects Supervisor

MAURICIO BAIoCHI

Post Production Supervisor

CHRISTOPHER SEGUINE

ALIGATOR HANDLER

Urbanzarzan

IBIS WRangler

Glen Grisco

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Caroline Clawson
Beth VanGelder
Michael Mailer & Maggie Mailer
Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game
Nature Conservancy
**Crew**

**TUG BOAT - CAROLYN HOEY**
- Captain David Jones
- Robert Fredrickson
- Jon-Paul Kubala
- Tim Carpenter

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR**
- Dennis Spors

**HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR**
- Dennis Szulborski

**TOWER MASTER RIGGER / STUNT COORDINATOR**
- Nick Cocciolone

**TOWER ASSISTANT RIGGER**
- Drew Derkaz

**CONSTRUCTION**
- James Hood

**CRANE OPERATOR**
- Mark Palmer, Mark Woods

**MAGNET CRANE OPERATOR**
- Julio Perez

**DUMP TRUCK DRIVER**
- Hazen Knox

**SCRAP HANDLERS**
- Robert Gleich, Julio Perez, Shawn Thorud

**STILL PHOTOGRAPHY**
- Hugo Glendenning

**PROPS**
- Garrett Pappow

**INTERNS**
- Chris Apczynski, Ryan Jennings Clark, Aaron Dawson, Michelle Diem, Spred Dijk, Douglas Ellis, Tom Friel, Dan Gizzie, Christina Hanson, Kimberly Hooper, Hana Kostis, Teal Louise, Curtis McGuire, Joey Miri, Ryan L. Myers, Garrett Pappow, Angela Pharn, Kate Price, Dan Roberts, Derek Schultz, Erin Sweeney, Bob Turek, Bethany Waldon

**MUSIC INTERNS BERLIN**
- Devon Caranicas, Spred Dijk, Dan Gizzie, Teal Louise, Kate Price

**VULTURE HANDLERS**
- Dennis Grisco, Glen Grisco

**BUS DRIVER**
- Rick Showalter, Satisfaction

**FLATBED DRIVER**
- Tiny

**CATERING**
- Continental Dining and Refreshment

**CAMERA RENTALS**
- Fletcher Camera
- Chater Camera

**LIGHTING AND GRIP RENTALS**
- Detroit Power and Light

**LOCATION SERVICES**
- Matthew Talt, Terf Inc.

**CASTING**
- Gail & Rice Inc.

**ADDITIONAL FABRICATION**
- Hughes and Lynn
ACT I
River Prelude
Hammond Organ: Dr. Lonnie Smith;
Pump Organ and Suonas: Jonathan Bepler

Nothing But Worms / So Will My Member Be
Wake Sopranos; KHU Sopranos; KHU Saxophones and Percussion; Breath Workers; The Wake Ensemble; Colostomy Bag

Eulogy for Norman: “Many lights appeared”
Eulogist: Elaine Stritch; The Wake Ensemble
(text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer)

The Widow’s Song: “Those are not the words”
Widow: Joan La Barbara; Wake Sopranos;
The Wake Ensemble
(text: “A Song of the Rolling Earth,” Walt Whitman)

Line in Nature
Harp Solo: Zeena Parkins; Organ: Dr. Lonnie Smith;
The Wake Ensemble (text: “Uriel,” Ralph Emerson)

REN Chrysler Gala: Approaches, Prologue and Procession
REN Drum Corps; REN Bugle Corps

Crudos Pensamientos y Fuerzas Feroces
Vocal: Lila Downs; Band: Mariachi Divas
(text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer translated by Juan Kruz Diaz de Garaio Esaola)

The Secret Name: “Cold fires wash”
Pump Organ: Dr Lonnie Smith; Soprano: Shara Worden;
Harp: Zeena Parkins; Ukulele: Mick Barr;
Vocals: Lila Downs; The Wake Ensemble
(text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer)

Chorus: “All is lost…”
REN Sales Executive Singers; REN Marimbas
(text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer)

The Tongue of the Pig
Tenor Saxophone: James Carter; Organ: Dr. Lonnie Smith;
Vocals: Phil Minton; Sidsel Endresen;
Paulo Henri D. Paguntalan; Wake Sopranos; Drums:
Jeffrey Berman; The Wake Ensemble
(text: The Western Lands, William S. Burroughs)

Throne Room Arioso
Tenor: Paul Giamatti; Vocals: Phil Minton;
Sidsel Endresen; Viola: Max Mandel;
Wet Horns: Axel Dörner; Art Baron
(text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer, David Grimm)

REN: “Thirst is in the rivers of the body”
Vocal arrangement: Lila Downs; Mariachi Divas;
REN Drum Corps; REN Bugle Corps
(text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer translated by Juan Kruz Diaz de Garaio Esaola)

Ballad of the Bullfighter
Vocals: Madyn Coakley; Additional Vocals: Jennie Knaggs;
Milica Nikcevic; Shara Worden; Child Ukulele: Sam Nivola; Accordion: Zeena Parkins; Djouras and Baglamas:
Jonathan Bepler; The Wake Ensemble; Kidsroom Ensemble; Bass Baritone: Eugene Perry
Song by Jonathan Bepler and Jennie Knaggs
(text: David Grimm, Matthew Barney, Jonathan Bepler)

The Seed of Set / Honeyball incantation
Vocals: Deborah Harry; Mezzo Soprano: Milica Nikcevic,
Kid’s Drums: Jonathan Bepler
(text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer)

Norman’s Fall: River of Feces
Recorders: Artie Carpenter; Suonas: Jonathan Bepler;
Chimes: Kidsroom Ensemble; Strings: Flux Quartet with Whistles composed and performed by David Amram

ACT II

KHU Overture and Aria: “Bring me this…”
Soprano: Belita Woods; Metalin Players of Detroit
(text: The Book of Going Forth by Day)

KHU: “Quietly get up…”
Bass-Baritone: Eugene Perry;
Drips and Wet Organ: Jonathan Bepler
(text: The Death of James Lee Byars, James Lee Byars)

KHU: River Rouge
Soprano: Belita Woods; Metalin Players of Detroit;
KHU Trombone Choir
(text: The Book of Going Forth by Day)

KHU: Crime Scene Response / Recovery of Osiris
“Osiris come…” and “Isis is faint…” vocal arrangements:
Jennie Knaggs; The KHU Sopranos; with vocal solos by Shara Worden; Tamara Whitty; Yana Lavovna; Leah Deraney;
KHU Saxophone and Percussion Ensemble; Metalin Players of Detroit
(text: The Book of Going Forth by Day)

The Smallest Sprout Shows
Vocals: Maggie Gyllenhal; Chimes: Sydney Swihart
(text: “A Child said, What is the grass?,” Walt Whitman)

Corrosion: “Death snips proud men”
Vocals: Phil Minton; Trumpet: Axel Dörner;
Wall Percussion: Milford Graves;
Beatboxer: Ryan Robinson; The Wake Ensemble;
Steam treatment by Jonathan Bepler
(text: “Death Snips Proud Men,” Carl Sandburg)

River of Fundament
Slam Poet: George Stonefish; R&B Singer: Terrell Howard;
Soprano: Shara Worden; Vocals: De’Quan Purdy; Marti Domination; Adrianna Nicole; Wake Sopranos; Beatboxer:
Ryan Robinson; Bent circuit toys: Kidsroom Ensemble and Jonathan Bepler; Hammond Organ: Dr. Lonnie Smith;
Harp: Zeena Parkins
(text: Matthew Barney)

Banjo Lament
Vocals and Banjo: Jennie Knaggs

KHU: Chrysler Ensemble: “I killed this fuck once”
Bass-Baritones: Eugene Perry and Herbert Perry;
Soprano: Jennie Knaggs; The KHU Sopranos; Metalin Players of Detroit; KHU Sax Ensemble; Breath Workers

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Music

KHU: Cutting Song: “14 pieces”
Bass-Baritones: Eugene Perry and Herbert Perry;
The KHU Sopranos; KHU Saxophone and Percussion Ensemble; Metalin Players of Detroit;
Isis vocals: Aimee Mullins

KHU: Casting Pit Resurrection
Longstrings and Skip Percussion players; KHU Saxophone and Percussion Ensemble; Metalin Players of Detroit;
Bass-Baritones: Eugene Perry and Herbert Perry; The KHU Sopranos; Solo Vocals: Jaime Easter; Hovering of the KHU vocals and arrangement by Jennie Knaggs (text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer)

KHU Epilogue
Vocals: Belita Woods; Djed Cymbals: Jonathan Bepler (text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer)

ACT III

Recitative and Trio: “The resurrection of filth” / “Go deep into the rot”
Soprano I: Maggie Gyllenhaal; Soprano II: Bobbi Starr; Bass: Stephen Payne; Body instrument: Danny Wylde; The Wake Ensemble (text: “Ideas of Good and Evil,” W.B. Yeats; Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer)

Hathferiti’s Aria: “I’m for it”
Soprano: Maggie Gyllenhaal; Strings: Flux Quartet; The Wake Sopranos (text: “To Think of Time,” Walt Whitman)

BA: Brooklyn Navy Drydock
Entourage Musicians; New York Crowd; Crowd vocal leaders

BA: The Battle of Horus and Set
Drum performance by Milford Graves

BA: The Hearing of Horus and Set
Countertenor: Brennan Hall; Bass-Baritone: Herbert Perry; Strings: Flux Quartet (text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer; David Grimm)

BA: The Judgment of Horus and Set
Kenny Merrick Mystic River Singers; Solo Jurist: Lauren Merrick; Countertenor: Brennan Hall; The Council of Hemingways; Strings: Flux Quartet; Vocals: Bobbi Starr (text: The Book of Going Forth by Day; Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer)

Throneroom Sousaxophone
Bass Saxophone: James Carter
Coronation and Aria
Countertenor: Brennan Hall; Sanitation Horns and Trombones: Guidonian Hand; Horn: Bobbi Starr (text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer)

Norman of the Sharp Silver Sword
Step Team; Frame Drums; and Bells: Milford Graves; Step dance Brennan Hall (text: “Hymn to Oggun”)

Step Gauntlet
Countertenor: Brennan Hall; Bass-Baritone: Herbert Perry; Tenor: Kevin McGuire; The Council of Hemingways; Mystic River Singers

I Am an Acme of Things Accomplished / I Bequeath Myself
Vocals: Ellen Burstyn; Strings: Flux Quartet; Chimes: Sydney Swihart (text: “Song of Myself,” Walt Whitman)

Siksil Wiblickan na Silwowiokca
(Crude Thoughts and Fierce Forces)
Vocal arrangement: Chief Dave Beautiful Bald Eagle (text: Ancient Evenings, N. Mailer translated to Lakota by Chief Dave Beautiful Bald Eagle)

Widow’s Lament: “Life I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths…”
Vocal composed and performed by: Joan La Barbara (text: “Song of Myself,” Walt Whitman)

I Ascend From the Moon
Soprano: Megan Schubert; Violin: Tom Chiu (text: “Song of Myself,” Walt Whitman)

Mother of All Lands
Soprano: Shara Worden; Cello Solo: Felix Fan (text: adaptation of “Song of Myself,” Walt Whitman)

Ka of Ka Song: “Tenderly will I use you…”
Hand Drum and Vocals: Michaela Dennis (text: “A Child said, What is the Grass?,” Walt Whitman)

I Bequeath Myself to the Dirt
Vocals: Shara Worden; Strings: Flux Quartet; Song by Jonathan Bepler and Shara Worden (text: “Song of Myself,” Walt Whitman)

Epilogue
Metalin Players of Detroit; The KHU Sopranos;
Soprano solo: Shara Worden

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Richard Prince, No Milk or Butter Since My Cow Left Home, 2007—08, reproduced with the permission of the artist.
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SPECIAL THANKS
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River of Fundament, 2014
© Matthew Barney
Houdini, James Lee Byars, Osiris. One born in Detroit. Another died there. One born in Cairo. Two died there. The purity of coincidence is no coincidence. But a happy one. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20).

“Strange as it may appear, I have found that the more spectacular the fastening to the eyes of the audience, the less difficult the escape really proves to be” (Houdini). So why, when a magician does the actual magic, is it always out of sight? Always out of sight, but never out of mind—magic being purely mental.

James Lee Byars, in a golden suit, lay quietly down, in a golden room. And vanished. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. When he quietly got up, his body had been replaced by a pentagram of crystal-clear crystals. The conspicuousness of its absence makes the heart grow out of sight.

The metaphoricity of Detroit is its tragedy and triumph. The Middle East in the Midwest. Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab. The body as a concealed weapon. No special effects. A matter of life or death. Certain death, then life. Right? Motown Magic. Except there are no magicians on the radio—magic being purely visual.

Even though you never see the rabbit morph into the dove, the body into crystals, the transformations are still experienced at the optical level, and not as smell or taste or sound. In Pasolini’s *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, the miracles are straightforwardly represented . . . by being unpresented. Neo-magic-realism. Mid-shot: a few loaves and fishes. Close-up: Jesus, intense. Long-shot: lots of loaves and fishes. Houdini might have been speaking of His close-up when he wrote: Concentration constitutes a powerful magnet that enraptures an audience spontaneously.

Metamorphosis as metaphor. And the other way round. It is by neither telling nor showing that Pasolini works his magic: the other way round. But the magic only works if you already know what you’re not getting to see. Maybe it was all a dream? It’s the fact of its invisibility that makes magic miraculous.

The river as means of escape. It throws them off the scent. Night of the Hunter. Huck and Jim rafting down to Cairo. The Confidence-Man tells of a group (including the reader) that embarks on a fantastic voyage. Accompanying us on our magical mystery tour will be a mysterious stranger, who will put his fellow passengers through a series of psychic tests. Our trust will be taken to pieces by installment, and only restored to some. After all, it’s not a real test if everyone passes. Taking a Living Man to Pieces and Restoring Him by Installment might be a
good title for a life of “the single most important Egyptian deity,” our friend Mr. Osiris.

Osiris rules the land of the dead, the western regions behind which the sun sets, yet the details of his life are so sketchy and contradictory, so scattered across a vast array of sources, that it’s difficult to discern a single, coherent narrative. So . . . He is locked in a casket by brother Set, and thrown into the Nile, whereupon He drowneth. Subsequently resuscitated by sister Isis, He is dismembered by brother Set, who scatters the 14 body parts across the sacred lands of Egypt. Sister does gather the fragments together, except for His privates. Those a crocodile ate (some say a fish). She resourcefully fashions a substitute from some wood, to make love to Him, whom she then preserves for all time by turning Him into the world’s first and still most famous mummy. Without a body, there was no afterlife.
“The sine qua non of their funerary practice (and consequently, the center of our perspective on them) remains the persistence of individual identity. In this insistence on the ground of being lies the absolute basis of reality for the Egyptians. And in this they are our fathers and our mothers in the West.”

—Tom Hare, ReMembering Osiris

The idea of a coherent identity persisting beyond bodily death developed into the notion of selfhood, of individuality, of something more or less corresponding to the soul—a spiritual property, integral to a single person and retaining that person's particular characteristics, not just throughout the life, but also surviving physical death. The bound linens of the mummification process lay directly behind the invention of the straitjacket. In the introduction to Il Mistero di Osiris, one of Houdini’s unrealized film scripts, he wrote, “Nothing in the world becomes lost.” Resistance to closure by ritualizing processes of containment and escape. If it's magic, why can’t it be everlasting? The life and many deaths of Osiris, the multiple near-death experiences of Harry Houdini, The Death of James Lee Byars: they have in common an understanding that everything that quietly lies down may quietly get up. Consider this life-death cycle as a way of thinking about the creative imagination, feeding myth, magic, art. And, the other way round. Everything that rises must converge: the rhythms of the seasons and the tides; comic, tragic, comic; more, less, more. The momentariness of the human predicament is where the cyclical is most noticeably, most sadly, not going to spin. Perhaps it is through the futility of our immortal longings that we call on Osiris and Houdini to magic the linearity of our life-spans into a wheel of eternal return.

Lady Lazarus claimed that Dying is an art, like everything else, I do it exceptionally well. I do it so it feels like hell. I do it so it feels real. I guess you could say I’ve a call.

In Religion and the Decline of Magic, Keith Thomas wrote that magic is dominant only when a community’s sense of control over its environment is weak. To make magic dominant may be why Houdini went out of his way to weaken the environment immediately surrounding his own physical self—with the aid of straitjackets, blindfolds, cages, graves, shackles, vices, immersion cabinets, prison cells, ropes, gallows, clamps, chains, caskets, and not least the mind-forg’d manacles of his audience.

The illusions, that the weakness of the magician’s environment was anything other than under His control, did not, at least at first, interfere with His ability to make His audience believe in His and their vulnerability. And the allusions, that the instruments of restraint evoked—to madness, criminality, crucifixion, imprisonment, disease, enslavement, torture—may have, at least at first, distracted attention from the contrivance of it all. With one bound our hero was free. Nightly. But over time, the audience’s familiarity with the methods of escapology, perhaps combined with the rise of cinema, ensured that his audience’s willingness to suspend disbelief, in the orchestrated theatricality of his act, steadily diminished. By the time Houdini arrived in Detroit in the fall of 1906, box-office sales had declined to such an extent that something drastic was called for.

What was called for was something less staged. Something more. More than mere suggestions of the loss of liberty. What was called for was the je ne sais quoi of reality. Which is why it was in Detroit that he made his first and still most famous leap into the void, a leap that introduced the very real possibility of the magician’s actual death, as the perfect end to a perfect evening. And so he leapt, handcuffed and in a casket (accounts vary dramatically) into the icy (frozen?) river, and was wrongly (prematurely by 20 years) pronounced dead upon surfacing, eight minutes later. The attraction of the audience to this outcome might be attributed to what Yeats called the fascination of what's difficult. Alternate explanation: Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy. Kill him, cries the audience. No, replies the sadist. “He could not change his act and so he died theatrically,” Houdini wrote of a one-time rival. But other than upping the ante, Houdini changed nothing significant in his act over a career that spanned two centuries and ages, ancient and modern.

James Lee Byars, shortly before his departure for Cairo, gave his own last performance in front of the Ancient Egyptian Pyramid at the Louvre. The gold leaf floating away had something of the vaudeville about it. “The characterization of tragedy is very like that of comedy in reverse” (Northrop Frye). And the other way 'round and
moving for that very reason. What he seemed to be trying to hide was that there was anything to hide. “The spiritual intelligence, or spirit, of a man was called KHU, and it seems to have taken form as a shining, luminous, intangible shape of the body,” said E.A. Wallis Budge in *Egyptian Ideas of a Future Life*. (Coincidentally, Houdini’s very last performance happened in Detroit.)

It’s easy enough to do it in a cell. It’s easy enough to do it and stay put. It’s the theatrical comeback in broad day to the same place, the same face, the same brute amused shout: “A miracle!” that knocks me out.

Henceforth, cheating death (constraint as opportunity) was to become the mainstay of the magic. Stravinsky said, “My freedom will be so much the greater and more meaningful the more narrowly I limit my field of action and the more I surround myself with obstacles. Whatever diminishes constraint diminishes strength. The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees oneself of the claims that shackle the spirits.”

So many contradictory accounts of his jump from the Belle Isle Bridge. Where to begin? Perhaps with the fact that Houdini was himself the source of most of those accounts, along with most of the many other contradictory accounts of his whole life and death. As per his instructions, the wizard was buried in the casket from his vaudeville days. The salt mines that extend beneath the Detroit River contain an unbelievably vast and complex transport system. ‘Twas once compared to the network of tunnels and secret chambers beneath the Great Pyramids, which Houdini once used as an escape route, as he relates in *Under the Pyramids*.

Osiris would have to agree with this that Houdini wrote: “Mystery attracts mystery.” He had been inspired to become a magician, in one version of events, after seeing a magic act called Palingenesia, or Taking a Living Man to Pieces and Restoring Him by Installment.

In order to escape from the restraining order of a certain kind of truth, he would resort to contortion, thus generating new truths: the inside-out, upside-down truth of myth. Adam Phillips suggests: “Above all, [Houdini] shows us, the audience wants to know that it can’t see: wants to thrill to its own ignorance.”

Hmmn. Houdini often performed in public free of charge, both to generate publicity and for the benefit of those unable to afford a ticket because they happened to come from the same sort of weakened environment of poverty and persecution that Houdini himself had escaped from. Always, and only, escaping. His Detroit jump was one of those non-paying stunts.

Perhaps what the audience wanted to know was not that it couldn’t see (which is not something an audience would want to know). And perhaps what that audience wanted to thrill to was not its own ignorance (which is hardly something those living in a weakened environment would be likely to thrill to). Perhaps what that audience was hoping to experience, even if only on
this one occasion, was precisely a divergence between seeing and believing, between destiny and free will, between supposed facts and each individual’s own interpretation of them. Dominance of the invisible, the impossible, the only dreamed of.

No square, not even a square one, is a circle, not even a magic one. So why risk one’s life only to end up back at square one, with nothing changed? Because everything had. Because to turn full circle is not ever to return to square one. It’s revolutionary.

The sensation of having returned to a previous state with nothing visibly changed heightens the impression of paranormalcy, and the sense that what we have just witnessed has been something so radical, it will ever remain beyond the capacity of our senses to absorb. Throughout his career Houdini—myth-maker/buster—emphasized that his performance had nothing to do with magic, nothing to do with the supernatural. He was fond of this rhetorical device, often introducing a perfunctory disclaimer at the start of a show, along the lines of: My tale is too fantastically strange for you to accept as fact, so for the purposes of an easy life, let me start by saying that “What I saw—or thought I saw—certainly did not take place” (Under the Pyramids). And thus the audience would start to wonder what parts of the illusion were real, what parts of the tale were fact. Harold Bloom suggested, of Ancient Evenings, that maybe only the craziest parts were true.

In ancient Egyptian culture, death stood in relationship to life as sculpture and hieroglyphics stood in relationship to the phenomenon it un-presented; that is to say, neither as interchangeable nor opposed, but as an analogue of the other.

With Osiris, as with James Lee Byars, as with Houdini, the facts and fiction get mixed up. But it’s for reasons of desire and through the function of myth, and not because there are no facts, only interpretations—the Nietzschean aphorism that launched a thousand and one ships of relativism. There is a revealing tension between the two different kinds of claims the proposition tries to make: about the world—there are no facts—and about the proposition’s own status in the world—this is a fact. For the first claim to be true, the second claim must be false. And the other way ’round. Or both are false. For both claims to be true, this can only be at different levels of determination, the difference between those levels demonstrating, pace FN, that there are indeed not only interpretations, but also facts—as proven by the claims the proposition is itself making. Why did he express as fact something that so shamelessly refuted itself? Perhaps because a deeper, more complex truth could, through blatant self-refutation, out itself.

The triumph of interpretation over facts is escapism, at its purest and simplest. Maybe this is why the people watching a magic act are called an audience, rather than viewers or spectators. Cognitive dissonance between heard word and seen image. There is a charge for the eyeing of my scars, there is a charge for the hearing of my heart—it really goes. And there is a charge, a very large charge for a word or a touch or a bit of blood or a piece of my hair or my clothes.

Asked how he, an atomic physicist, could possibly believe that the horseshoe nailed above his laboratory would bring him luck, Niels Bohr replied, “I don’t actually believe it has brought me luck. But the person that gave it said that it would work, regardless of whether I believed in it or not.” Fission as fusion. And the other way ’round.

Nothing in the world ever becomes lost. Is there death after life after death? Why, yes: the passage through one civilization, person, work of art into another. “I have stretched ropes from steeple to steeple; garlands from window to window; golden chains from star to star, and I dance” (Rimbaud).

Death as overkill—turning every life within a life into a fragment, into a stage, into if not life, then, THE END. To be Continued. And, and then he woke up.
MATTHEW BARNEY
was born in 1967 in San Francisco and lives and works in New York. He has received numerous awards, including the Aperto prize at the 1993 Venice Biennale; the Hugo Boss award in 1996; the 2007 Kaiser Ring Award in Goslar, Germany; and the 2011 Golden Gate Persistence of Vision Award, 54th San Francisco International Film Festival. Barney has been included in exhibitions such as Documenta IX in Kassel, Germany; the 1993 and 1995 Whitney Biennial; and the 1993 and 2003 Venice Biennale. His solo exhibition, The Cremaster Cycle, organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, traveled to the Museum Ludwig, Cologne and the Musée d' Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2002—03). A retrospective of the Drawing Restraint series organized by the 21st c Museum for Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan, traveled to Leeum Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Serpentine Gallery, London; and Kunthalle Vienna (2005—08). Other recent exhibitions include Matthew Barney at the Fondazione Merz, Torino (2008—09), and Matthew Barney: Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail at Schaulager Basel, Switzerland (2010). Barney’s 2013 exhibition, Subliming Vessel: The Drawings of Matthew Barney, was held at the Morgan Library and Museum, New York, and traveled to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. Matthew Barney: River of Fundament will open in March of this year at Haus der Kunst in Munich, Germany.

NORMAN MAILER
(1923—2007)
was an American novelist, journalist, essayist, playwright, screenwriter, and film director who is considered to have been an innovator of New Journalism, a form of creative nonfiction that wove autobiography, real events, and political commentary into unconventional novels. During his 60-year career, Mailer wrote more than 40 books, winning the Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction and the National Book Award in 1968 for The Armies of the Night. Mailer received a second Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1980 for The Executioner’s Song, which served as the inspiration for Matthew Barney’s 1999 film Cremaster 2, in which Mailer portrayed Harry Houdini. In 2005 he was awarded the National Book Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. Mailer worked on Ancient Evenings from 1972–1983, spending more time writing this book than any other. Set in Egypt between 1290–1100 BC and chronicling the lives of its protagonist Menenhetet I, Ancient Evenings was declared

JONATHAN BEPLER
was born in Philadelphia, and was self-taught on many instruments by the time he attended Bennington College in 1982. Bepler studied composition with Louis Calabro, improvisation with Bill Dixon, percussion with Milford Graves, and performance studies with artists and choreographers including Lisa Nelson and Min Tanaka. His interest in collaboration and interdisciplinary work continued in New York City, his work often involving the co-mingling of many seemingly disparate elements, a love of chaos, and a thirst for reconciliation. Bepler has collaborated with choreographers including John Jasperse, Sasha Waltz, Jennifer Lacey, and Wally Cardona. A multi-instrumentalist, he has led ensembles of both improvised and pre-composed music and has appeared often in New York and in Europe. His concert music includes a commission for the Ensemble Modern, the Glenn Branca Ensemble, and the Basel Synfonietta. A collaboration with artist Anno-Sofi Sidén, featuring actors, architecture, and technicians and of the Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden, was shown in Stockholm and Berlin. Bepler’s work with Barney has spanned nearly 20 years and has included some seven films and nine performances. He lives and works in Berlin.
“an ambitious and daring work of fiction,” by one critic, though it received generally negative reviews at the time it was published. As Harold Bloom wrote in the *New York Review of Books*: “Mailer’s is too formidable a case of an authentic literary drive to be dismissed, and dismissal is certainly not my intention. *Ancient Evenings* is on the road of excess, and what Karl Kraus said of the theories of Freud may hold for the speculations of Mailer also—it may be that only the craziest parts are true. Mailer probably is aware that his Egyptian obsessions are in the main tradition of American literature, carrying on from much of the imagery of the major writers of the American renaissance.”

**CAST**

**CHIEF DAVE BEAUTIFUL BALD EAGLE** (Norman III) was born in 1919, a member of the Lakota tribe in South Dakota. He has appeared in movies with the likes of Errol Flynn and has danced with Marilyn Monroe. He is known for his roles in *Skins* (2002), *Imprint* (2007) and *Lakota Woman: Siege at Wounded Knee* (1994). He once traveled with Casey Tibbs’ Wild West Show and is one of the best-known participants each year at the annual Days of ’76 Parade in Deadwood. Among his proudest accomplishments is having served his country in the United States Army in WWII, in which he survived a German raid. After the death of his first wife, Dave Bald Eagle pursued race-car driving, skydiving, semi-pro baseball, and entered pro rodeo, riding bareback broncs and bulls. About 17 years ago, at a meeting in Puerto Rico, he was made First Chief of the United Indigenous Nations, a society of chiefs from various reservations.

**ELLEN BURSTYN** (Hathfertiti), born in Detroit in 1932, left home at the age of 18 to work as a model and moved to New York in the 1950s where she began working in television and in minor film roles. Burstyn received her first Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress for her work in *The Last Picture Show* (1971), after which she moved from supporting to leading film and stage roles. Burstyn received a second Academy Award nomination for her lead performance in *The Exorcist* (1973), and won the Academy Award for Best Actress the following year for her work in Martin Scorsese’s *Alice Doesn’t Live Here Anymore*. In 1975, she won the Tony Award for her lead performance in the Broadway production of *Same Time, Next Year*, and received a Golden Globe Award and a fourth Academy Award nomination for her performance in the 1978 film version of the play. Burstyn has worked consistently in film, television, and theater since, receiving multiple awards and nominations along the way, including seven additional Golden Globe Award nominations, five Emmy Award nominations (two wins), and two more Academy Award for Best Actress nominations for her performances in the films *Resurrection* (1980) and *Requiem for a Dream* (2000). In 2012 Burstyn appeared in the television miniseries *Political Animals*, with Sigourney Weaver and Carla Gugino, and received an Emmy Award for her role the following year. Burstyn’s recent work includes in films such as *Main Street* (2010) and *Another Happy Day* (2011).

**MADYN G. COAKLEY** (Hathfertiti) is a California native currently living in Virginia. She is a 13-year-old pursuing acting and singing. Coakley began her professional career at age nine when cast in a national television commercial. She has since performed in television and stage roles in pursuit of her theatrical dreams. Coakley’s portrayal of Hathfertiti marks her film debut.

**LILA DOWNS** (Ranchera Singer), a Mexican-American singer and songwriter, is one of the most innovative proponents of Mesoamerican music on both sides of the border. By drawing on a pan-Latin palette of music as well as African root, American folk, jazz, blues, and rock, Downs has won accolades and a devoted following of world music fans. Known for her smoky voice and magnetic performances, she has created a unique body of work that defies categorization. In addition to earning a Latin Grammy in 2005 for Best Folk Album (*Una Sangre*), Downs has headlined venues all over the world, and appeared at major festivals and events including the World Festival of Sacred Music—appearing with such luminaries as the Dalai Lama—and at WOMAD, Live Earth, and the Academy Awards. Downs’ music and performances have been included in several films such as *Frida*, *Tortilla Soup*, *Real Women Have Curves*, *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, and Carlos Saura’s *Fados*. 
PAUL GIAMATTI (Ptah-nem-hotep) was born in 1967 in New Haven, CT. Giamatti began his career as a supporting actor in several films produced during the 1990s including Private Parts (1997), The Truman Show (1998), Saving Private Ryan (1998), The Negotiator (1998), and Man on the Moon (1999), before earning lead roles in several projects in the 2000s such as American Splendor (2003), Sideways (2004), Cinderella Man (2005), The Illusionist (2006), John Adams (2008), Cold Souls (2009), Barney’s Version (2010), and Win Win (2011). Giamatti returned to his alma mater in 2013, to play Shakespeare’s Hamlet at the Yale University Theater. That year Giamatti was also cast as Harold Levinson in the Christmas special of television series Downton Abbey. He will play villain The Rhino in The Amazing Spider-Man 2, to be released in 2014. Giamatti received 26 awards between 2001 and 2008, including Emmy and Golden Globe awards.

MILFORD GRAVES (Norman II) was born in 1941 in Queens, New York. He is an American jazz drummer and percussionist, most noteworthy for his early avant-garde contributions in the early 1960s with Paul Bley and the New York Art Quartet. He is considered to be a free jazz pioneer, liberating the percussion from its timekeeping role. Graves has worked as a sideman and session musician with a variety of established jazz musicians throughout his career, including Don Pullen, Eddie Gomez, Andrew Cyrille, Rashied Ali, Kenny Clarke, Don Moye, Philly Joe Jones, John Zorn, and Albert Ayler. He is also invested in research in the field of healing through music. Over the past 42 years he has performed in numerous music events, and given countless lectures and workshops on herbology, acupuncture, and nutrition, as well as body movement and martial arts. Graves is presently the director of the International Center for Medicinal and Scientific Studies, co-director of the Institute of Percussive Studies, and recently a professor of music/music healing at Bennington College in Vermont (1973 to 2012). He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in music composition in 2000 and a proclamation from New York City in 2005 for his research on the relationship between heart sounds and music.

MAGGIE GYLLENHAAL (Hathfertiti), born in New York City in 1977. She made her debut in her father Stephen Gyllenhaal's film Waterland (1992) and emerged as a star in Secretary (2002). Soon after graduation from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London, Gyllenhaal appeared in supporting roles in Cecil B. DeMented (2000) and Donnie Darko (2001). Gyllenhaal has since appeared in an eclectic range of films, including Sherrybaby (2006), for which she was nominated for a Golden Globe; Trust the Man (2006); and numerous large budget films including World Trade Center (2006) and The Dark Knight (2008). She was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role in Crazy Heart (2009). Gyllenhaal has also appeared in such theatrical plays as Closer (2000), Homebody/ Kabul (BAM, 2004), as well as in television productions like Strip Search (2004). In the 2012 film Won’t Back Down, she plays a parent involved in a takeover of her child’s school; she recently appeared as a secret service agent in the action-thriller White House Down (2013). Gyllenhaal is actively engaged in issues concerning human rights, civil liberty, anti-poverty, and parent trigger causes.

BRENNAN HALL (Horus), an American countertenor based in New York City, has made his professional debut singing as a soloist with the American Bach Soloist, under the direction of Jeffrey Thomas. Hall was heralded by the San Francisco Classical Voice for his “…silky vocal production and suave presentation… and admirable musical intelligence.” He has performed the title role in Philip Glass’ Akhnaten with the Indianapolis Opera Company and the Jacobs School of Music. He also sang the roles of Willie in Small Box, a new one-act opera by Bruce L. Pearson and Herman Whitfield III, and the Sorceress in Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas. He has appeared in scenes as Sesto (Giulio Cesare), Orfeo (Orfeo ed Euridice), and Malcome (La donna del Lago). Hall’s concert work as a soloist includes Bach’s Mass in B Minor, Haydn’s Lord Nelson Mass, Handel’s Messiah and Judas Maccabaeus. He is a frequent soloist for the Bloomington Bach Cantata Project and the Bloomington Early Music Festival.
JENNIE KNAJGS (Nephthys) is a singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist based in Detroit. She has performed extensively on the streets and stages of Europe and the US performing a wide range of musical styles, from folk to opera. Previous projects include Swedish political street theater troupe, Skramselfika; pop Americana with a cappella quartet Invisible Hands; several traditional country groups; and New Wave operas with the Atlantian Initiative based in Berlin and the Burning Man Opera based in San Francisco. Knaggs studied performing arts and community development at Antioch College with a focus on art, music, and theater as tools for social change. Within this program she studied the culture and traditional music of the Appalachian region. She is the 2000 Hollerin’ Champion of Wise County, VA and Letcher County, KY. Current projects include Lac La Belle, a trio performing various styles of Americana, including old-time cowboy yodeling and western swing, alongside original tunes influenced by the traditional American song canon. Knaggs is guitarist, vocalist, and songwriter for the rock band I, Crime whose EP Get the Knife and single “Dove Skin Gloves” was released by Woodbridge Records. She also performs as a back up vocalist and percussionist in the Detroit-based 10-piece Nigerian pop group, Odu Afrobeat Orchestra, led by Adeboye Adegbenro, a former bandmate to Fela Kuti. Knaggs recently completed a month long artist residency program at the Art Monastery in Labro, Italy, performing and teaching traditional American folk music. She can currently be found at her bi-monthly residency singing solo at D'Mongo's Speakeasy in downtown Detroit.

JOAN LA BARBARA (The Widow of Norman), born in 1947 in Philadelphia, is a vocalist, composer, performer, and sound artist associated with contemporary music. She is a former student of Helen Boatwright, and has worked with her husband Morton Subotnick since 1979, as well with other contemporary composers such as John Cage, Robert Ashley, Morton Feldman, Philip Glass, Larry Austin, Peter Gordon, and the choreographer Merce Cunningham. She composed the music for the Sesame Street animated segment “Signing Alphabet.” La Barbara has collaborated with artists including Lita Albuquerque, Matthew Barney, Cathey Billian, Melody Sumner Carnahan, Judy Chicago, Ed Emshwiller, Kenneth Goldsmith, Peter Gordon, Christian Marclay, Bruce Nauman, Steina, Woody Vasulka, and Lawrence Weiner. In the early part of her career, she performed and recorded with Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and jazz artists Jim Hall, Hubert Laws, Enrico Rava, and arranger Don Sebesky, developing her own unique vocal and instrumental sound. In 2008, La Barbara was awarded the American Music Center’s Letter of Distinction for significant contributions to the field of contemporary American music. She has created works for multiple voices, chamber ensembles, music theater, orchestra and interactive technology. La Barbara is composing a new opera reflecting on the artistic process and sounds within the mind.

JOHN BUFFALO MAILER (Norman I) was born in Brooklyn and is the youngest child of the late Norman Mailer. A graduate of Wesleyan University, he has written several screenplays and is a freelance journalist. In 2006 he co-wrote with his father The Big Empty (Nation Books). In Oliver Stone's Wall Street 2: Money Never Sleeps, he plays the supporting character Robby Mancins, an options trader. He is a member of the Dramatists’ Guild, Actor’s Equity Association, SAG, and The Actors Studio. Mailer has lectured at the University of Notre Dame, Wesleyan, the University of Athens, Syracuse University, the New York Society for Ethical Culture, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles, Long Island University, and has appeared on Hannity and Combs, Air America, Democracy Now, WNYC, CSPAN's Book TV, and thebigthink.com. Mailer’s writing has appeared in Playboy, New York Magazine, Provincetown Arts, Lid, Stop Smiling, Corriera della Sera, The Norman Mailer Review, ESPN Books, and The American Conservative. In 2002, Mailer was selected as one of People magazine’s sexiest men alive. Mailer’s recent work can be seen on screen in the new film Hello Herman (2013) directed by Michelle Danner.

AIMEE MULLINS (The Ka of Norman and Isis) is an actress, public speaker, model, and athlete based in New York City. Her film debut was a starring role as the Entered Novitiate in Matthew Barney’s 2002 film Cremaster 3. As an athlete, Mullins was a member of the Georgetown University Division I Track and Field Team and subsequently a member of the US team for the
1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. That year she set world records for the 100 meter dash and the long jump, and won two gold medals in the Paralympics. She is an inductee in the US Track and Field Hall of Fame and a National Collegiate Athletic Association Hall of Fame Honoree. Her foray into modeling includes a 1999 collaboration with the late Alexander McQueen. Mullins is also a world-renowned public speaker engaged in topics such as innovative thinking, body image and identity, and inclusive design. In addition to her professional career, she sits on numerous boards and served as president of the Women’s Sports Foundation from 2007—09. Mullins has been the recipient of awards including the Women of Distinction Award from the National Association of Women in Education in 1997, Doctor of Humane Letters Honorary PhD from St. John Fisher College in 2000, and the Gold Medal from the Italian Republic in 2009. Mullins wrote and directed the short film Cut Out in 2008. Acting credits include Marvelous (Siofra Campbell), World Trade Center (Oliver Stone), Quid Pro Quo (Carlos Brooks), Agatha Christie: Poirot on A&E, and Jennifer Elster’s In the Woods (2010).

STEPHEN PAYNE (Usermare) is an actor who has appeared in Rent (2005), Detachment (2011), and Compliance (2012). He made his Broadway debut in August: Osage County and was recently in White Woman Street (Irish Rep). Payne’s theater work includes Tina Landau’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream; Ola Mafaalani’s A Clockwork Orange and Wings of Desire; Shanley’s Sailor’s Song; Bus Stop, dir. Joe Hardy; Boy Gets Girl; Bukowski From Beyond; South of No North, Fool for Love; Hatful of Rain; and Night Dance. Payne’s first film and TV accomplishments include Shoot First and Pray You Live, Cake Eaters, Suburban Girls, Hell’s Kitchen, Law & Order, The Sopranos, and Third Watch. He appears in the 2013 film Inside Llewyn Davis.

EUGENE PERRY (Set) has captured critical and popular acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. Recent engagements include the title role in Hans Werner Henze’s El Cimarrón at the Greenwich Music Festival; the world premiere of Anthony Davis’ Waconda’s Dream at Opera Omaha; Wagner’s Ring Cycle at the Opera Theater of Pittsburgh and Long Beach Opera; and the world premiere of Philip Glass’ Waiting for the Barbarians, a production for Erfurt Opera in Germany that was also performed with Amsterdam Opera, the Barbican in London, and the Austin Lyric Opera. Perry has toured throughout Europe as Porgy in Barkhymier’s production of Porgy and Bess, and also performed the role with the Cape Town Opera, South Africa. Other engagements include: a world premiere of Davis’ Amistad with the Lyric Opera of Chicago; a world premiere of Glass’ Galileo Galilee in Chicago and London; world premieres of Glass’ Sound of a Voice and Orphée at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, MA; and the world premiere of Glass’ The Penal Colony in Seattle. Perry also performed Don Giovanni with the Atlanta Opera; the Peter Sellars production Seraphin by composer Wolfgang Rihm with Stuttgart Opera; Escamillo in Bizet’s Carmen with Dayton, Durham, and Mobile Operas; and Il Trovatore with Opera Memphis. He performed in a new work by Amy Beach, Cabildo, as part of the Great Performers Series at Alice Tully Hall. Perry has performed numerous productions at the New York City Opera including Weisgall’s Esther, the American premiere of Janácek’s From the House of the Dead, Turandot, Madama Butterfly, Streetscene, La Bohème, and I Pagliacci, telecast on PBS.

HERBERT PERRY (Set) is an internationally acclaimed artist who has appeared in major roles with leading opera companies throughout the world. With the Metropolitan Opera, Perry has performed the title roles in Le Nozze di Figaro, Leporello, and Don Giovanni, and the role of Colline in La Bohème. He has performed with the Lyric Opera of Chicago in the roles of Giorgio/Walton in Bellini’s I Puritani; with the New York City Opera in the roles of Timur in Turandot and the title role in Le Nozze di Figaro. He performed Mephistopheles in Gounod’s Faust with the Edmonton Opera, and Don Alfonso in Così fan tutte at the Vancouver Opera. With Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, he sang the title role in Bartok’s Bluebeard’s Castle, and the role of Stephan Kumalo in Kurt Weill’s Lost in the Stars at Virginia’s Art Festival. He also sang the roles of Fauner and Hunding in Wagner’s Das Rheingold/Die Walküre at Long Beach Opera. He made his Lincoln Center Festival debut as Vasco de Gama in Philip Glass’ White Raven, directed by Robert Wilson;
and performed with the Tokyo Philharmonic and in Amsterdam for VARA Radio in John Adams’ *El Niño*. He has appeared with Opera de Nice in the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro*; and as Nick Shadow in Stravinsky's *The Rake’s Progress* at Opera Montpellier, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Teatro Real in Madrid, Teatro Massimo Bellini in Catania, and the Salzburg Festival in Austria. His performance in Kurt Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins* at Opera de Lyon is available on DVD. He appeared on public television as Leporello in Peter Sellars' *Don Giovanni*; also available on DVD, *Live from Vienna*. He is currently singing with the Paris Opera.

**ELAINE STRITCH** (Eulogist), an octogenarian Broadway legend, has appeared in numerous stage plays and musicals, feature films, and many television programs. Born in Detroit in 1925, she prepared for the stage at the Dramatic Workshop of the New School and made her debut in 1944. She made it to Broadway two years later and has since become the toast of both Broadway and London’s West End, collecting a number of trophies on both continents over the years for such award-winning turns as *Bus Stop*, *Sail Away*, *A Delicate Balance*, *Show Boat*, and *Company*. She performed in *Endgame* at BAM in 2008. She won an Emmy Award in 1993 for her guest role on *Law & Order*, and another in 2004 for the television documentary of her one-woman show. From 2007 to 2013, she played the recurring role of Jack Donaghy’s mother Colleen on NBC’s *30 Rock*, a role that won her a third Emmy in 2008. Most recently, the documentary *Elaine Stritch: Shoot Me* (2013) follows the 89-year-old Stritch as she dominates the stage in her one-woman cabaret act and offers an inside look at her life.

**SHARA WORDEN** (Lieutenant Worden) received her degree in opera from the University of North Texas. After moving to New York, she began studying composition with composer/performer Padma Newsome (Clogs, The National). During this time she composed music for several off-Broadway theater productions. In 2004, she assembled a band, My Brightest Diamond, and released *Bring Me the Workhorse* (2006), *A Thousand Shark’s Teeth* (2008), and *All Things Will Unwind* (2011) on Asthmatic Kitty Records. Worden recently composed an opera that was co-produced by Hamburg International Summer Festival and deSingel International Arts Campus. She has also received commissions from yMusic, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Young New Yorkers’ Chorus, Brooklyn Rider, and MusicNOW Festival. Composers, songwriters, and filmmakers have sought out Worden's distinctive voice, including David Lang, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Sufjan Stevens, and The Decemberists, David Byrne, and Fatboy Slim. In 2012, Worden was the recipient of the Kresge Artist Fellowship in the performing arts.