



CLIP BOOK



PREVIEWS/

FEATURES

The New York Times

October 31, 2015

Also ran online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/31/arts/music/hopscotch-takes-opera-into-the-streets.html>

THE Arts

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2015

The New York Times

Loving Letters, One Poet To Another

As both poets and personalities, Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell could hardly have been more different. She: intensely shy and self-doubting, producing gemlike, allusive poems so infrequently that her collected verse fits easily into an inch-thick volume. He: extroverted and convivial, if afflicted, like her, with a fundamentally solitary nature, and a prolific writer who came to exemplify the confessional poetry of the 1950s and 1960s. And yet, as their long correspondence movingly attests, each considered the

Dear Elizabeth
McGinn/Cazale Theater

other a cherished friend — “best friend,” as they told third parties — as well as a sympathetic and understanding reader (and, at times, critic). Sarah Ruhl’s play “Dear Elizabeth,” which is having its New York premiere at the McGinn/Cazale Theater in a production from Women’s Project Theater, draws on their decades of correspondence (collected in the volume “Words in Air”) to dramatize, after a fashion, the

Continued on Page 5

A WORD WITH: STEPHEN KING

More Than A Maker Of Monsters

By ALEXANDRA ALTER

There’s a story Stephen King can’t resist telling. He was shopping for cinnamon buns and potato chips one day when a woman approached him. She told him that she didn’t care for horror stories like the ones he wrote, and preferred uplifting stories, like “The Shawshank Redemption.” When Mr. King told her he wrote that too, she didn’t believe him.

If there are any lingering doubts about Mr. King’s stylistic range, they should be put to rest by his new collection, “The Bazaar of Bad Dreams,” which features 20 stories that seem to touch on every genre imaginable, except for romance. There are crime and horror stories, a narrative poem and a grim western, along with realistic stories about marriage, aging and substance abuse.

The collection also functions as a companion of sorts to his 2000 book “On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft.” In his new book, Mr. King introduces each story, describing how he got the idea and what inspired him. The

Continued on Page 5



GUIA BESANA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Recasting Rodin’s Life and Work

The Artist’s Molds Are Helping to Pay for the Restoration of a Museum

By DOREEN CARVAJAL

PARIS — At the end of his life, the sculptor Auguste Rodin ceded his valuable art collection and plaster molds to the French state, part of a deal he negotiated to save the palatial 18th-century mansion that housed his studio and create his own museum on the Left Bank.

Now, he and his vintage molds have again come to the museum’s rescue. The sales of newly cast Rodin bronzes are helping to finance a \$17.7 million restoration of the Rodin Museum, where cracks in

The makeover of the Rodin Museum, at the Hôtel Biron, features more natural light. Many sculptures have been cleaned for the first time.

the walls have appeared over the decades and where the oak parquet floors have warped with the weight of sculptures including the marble lovers entwined in “The Kiss.”

It is the first major renovation for the two-story Hôtel Biron, which stands within a seven-acre for-

mal garden in view of the golden dome of Les Invalides. The museum has been closed since January as part of a three-year construction project that is nearing completion, with a public reopening scheduled for Rodin’s birthday, Nov. 12.

The aim of the restoration, according to the museum’s architects, is to evoke the creative atmosphere that inspired the sculptor, who retreated here because, he said, “my eyes encounter grace, sitting here surrounded by light.”

Continued on Page 2

Where the Limo Comes With an Opera

By WILLIAM ROBIN

LOS ANGELES — On a recent Friday afternoon, Yuval Sharon gestured enthusiastically at one of many television screens mounted inside a circular wooden structure under construction in a large parking lot in this city’s Arts District. “It won’t ever be the same thing twice,” he said.

Mr. Sharon and his team at the Industry — the experimental-opera company he started in 2012 — were in the midst of completing the Central Hub, the metaphorical and literal center of their ambitious new production, “Hopscotch,” what they are calling a “mobile opera in 24 cars,” which will unfold across Los Angeles beginning on Saturday and running through Nov. 15.

Explaining the basics of “Hopscotch” is surprisingly difficult, and the Industry appears content to leave the opera somewhat shrouded in mystery. You buy a ticket and are instructed to arrive at a certain location at a specific time, perhaps across the street from a boisterous synagogue in the Hispanic neighborhood of Boyle Heights, say, or at the edge of a parking lot near the freeway.

A limo pulls up, an attendant gestures you inside, and the opera begins. Singers, actors, instrumen-



JOSH LIPTON

Ash Nichols, left, production manager for “Hopscotch,” and the musician Jxel Rajchenberg.

Where Limo Comes With an Opera

From First Arts Page

talists and dancers — a total of 128 performers are involved in the production — transform the city around you as you are driven around, occasionally changing cars, going for a stroll in a park or being guided through a building. Enter a vehicle and encounter a cellist; step out of a car and watch a saxophone quartet play in the hills of Griffith Park. The opera's 24 vignettes take place along three distinct routes — all running simultaneously — so each experience of the piece remains just a partial snapshot of the opera's elusive whole.

"It's kind of like 24 10-minute operas, basically. They're all completely unique, but they are all connected," Mr. Sharon, the opera's director, said.

For the Industry, a company that emphasizes its relationship to Los Angeles, an opera in moving vehicles was a natural next step after its acclaimed 2013 production of "Invisible Cities," which placed its performers almost unnoticeably in the middle of Union Station's commuter bustle and had audience members listen in over headphones. Back when "Invisible Cities" was mired in logistical difficulties, Mr. Sharon and his designer began discussing their next project.

"We thought, how can we inspire ourselves by proposing something even harder than 'Invisible Cities' that will hopefully keep us going?" he said. "What else would feel like a project that could only happen in Los Angeles? And, of course, we started thinking about driving, and cars, because it's so crucial to the city's identity."

"Hopscotch" derives its title from Julio Cortázar's episodic 1963 novel, originally planned as the opera's source material. When Cortázar's estate refused to grant rights to the story, though, the industry elected to move forward with an original plot. A team of six writers and six composers — all based in the Los Angeles area — wrote the libretto and the music. In group meetings, the collaborators outlined an overall structure, and composers and writers paired off to work on each individual scene. With fantastical dream sequences and arias that describe the existence of parallel universes, "Hopscotch" is less a traditional plot than a trippy exploration of time and memory. The narrative (such as it is) revolves around the puppet-maker Lucha, who is played by 18 different actors, musicians and dancers in different stages of her life.

When asked about the production's logistical challenges, Mr. Sharon and his collaborators burst

out laughing. The team worked closely with the Los Angeles Department of Transportation to engineer precise travel routes. Contingency paths were planned to account for street closings; composers built repeated vamping gestures into scenes, so that an extra red light wouldn't disrupt the flow of the drama. Communication is key: Musicians standing on a street corner need to know exactly when a limo with audience members might drift by, so that they can begin a new chapter.

"Opera is so rarely spontaneous," Mr. Sharon said. "Everything always seems incredibly fixed, and set. And this will never be that, ever." Performances are limited to Saturdays and Sundays to assure that the city's notorious traffic won't stretch the opera to Wagnerian lengths.

Recent preview performances on two of the three routes were surprisingly smooth, a defamiliarizing and ultimately haunting journey through the cityscape. In more subdued scenes, you might ride alongside an older Lucha in the form of a pensive solo flutist, or be crammed next to three guitarists as a teenage Lucha celebrates her quinceañera with a simple song. But each route also includes several stunning set pieces: a thrilling drive alongside a riverbank, as Lucha sings while standing on the back of a Jeep; a psychedelic traversal of the landmark Bradbury Building, with dancers and musicians scattered among multiple stories; an elevator ride to a rooftop pool, where brass instruments trade an-



From left, Katherine Paez, assistant stage manager; Yuval Sharon, the opera's director; and Jane Stephens Rosenthal, an actor and writer. The "Hopscotch" production involves 128 performers.

tiphonal fanfares from atop neighboring buildings. As each trip yields only a third of the full story, it's never quite clear how it all adds up, but "Hopscotch" leaves a powerful impression.

And the disorienting experience still feels operatic. Mr. Sharon cited as his model a lineage of opera that stretches back through Stockhausen and Cage, rather than Rossini and Puccini. "Opera is inherently this mix of media, in an incredibly unpredictable and unstable way," he said. Snippets of Monteverdi's "L'Orfeo," from 1607, float through various scenes.

"I feel like I'm composing in

three dimensions," said the composer Ellen Reid, one of the collaborators. "I'm composing an installation, and motion, and using all of my senses, in a different way than it would be for a regular concert piece."

For those dissuaded by the price of "Hopscotch" — tickets begin at \$125 — there is also that Central Hub, outside the Southern California Institute of Architecture, free to enter, that simultaneously streams live audio and video from all 24 of the opera's chapters in a circle of screens. The audience traveling the main routes are given hand-held cameras for several scenes, and can film the action

themselves. The final performance of each day also concludes at the Hub, where limos take the audience and musicians for a shimmering final chorus.

Mr. Sharon was recently named the Los Angeles Philharmonic's newest artist-collaborator, and he is already contemplating post-"Hopscotch" opportunities to take that orchestra into the streets starting in the fall of 2017.

"I love Disney Hall," he said of the orchestra's Gehry-designed home. "But I love the idea also of bringing an institution out into the world that we've been creating, which is right into the fabric of the city."

SONGBIRD
SINGS
TODAY AT 2 & 8 • SUN AT 3
212 279 4200 / WWW.59E59.ORG

WINNER — PULITZER PRIZE
"THE FLICK"
SMARTY (COM) 2 881-0841

Los Angeles Times

September 13, 2015

Also ran online: <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-ca-cm-fall-arts-hopscotch-opera-la-20150913-story.html>

F16 SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2015

Los Angeles Times

LATIMES.COM/CALENDAR

FALL ARTS | OPERA



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Yuval Sharon, center, and company on a downtown street: "When I tell people some of the logistic details, their heads start spinning." WALLY SKALI/ Los Angeles Times

Opera in the fast lane

Only in L.A.: The Industry's car-centric 'Hopscotch' hits the streets Oct. 31

By JESSICA GELT

The world is getting its first mobile opera performed live in cars, and fittingly the stage is the streetscape of Los Angeles. Called "Hopscotch" and presented by the experimental opera company the Industry, the breathtakingly complex production is shaping up to be one of the most audacious cultural events of the year.

It comes two years after the Industry's critically lauded immersive opera "Invisible Cities," a modern take on Italo Calvino's 1972 eponymous Italian novel that unfolded amid the hustle of downtown's Union Station. Audience members followed the action through the station while listening to the music on wireless headsets.

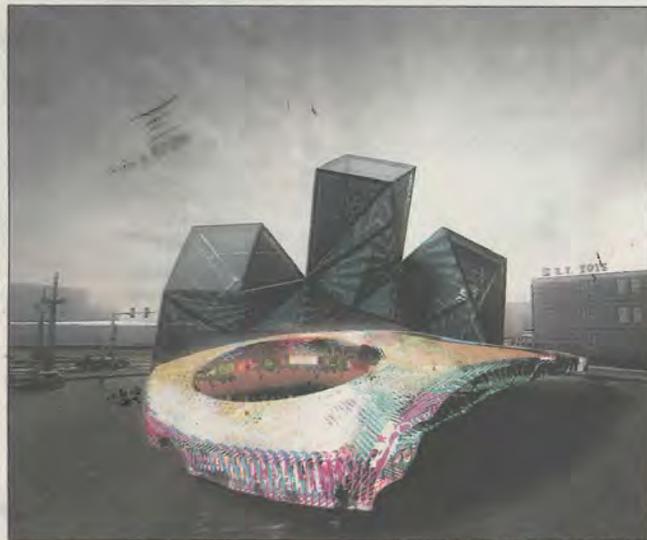
"Hopscotch," which opens Oct. 31, makes "Invisible Cities" seem like "Chopsticks." Artistic director Yuval Sharon and production designer Jason H. Thompson have dreamed up an idea so far-fetched, the main production question has simply been "Is this viable?"

"We're telling the audience, 'Just trust us. You don't know where you're going, but if you get in this car, you'll get back to your original car safely,'" Sharon says, sitting at a round table in the Industry's downtown offices surrounded by six creative collaborators. "What will happen to your experience of the city and the landscape if you don't know where you're going?"

The unadorned room is about the size of a bathroom in a Bel-Air mansion, but with none of the bling. A few desks squat in a corner across from a water cooler. The most prominent feature in the space is a wall stacked high with boxes of low-fat Pop Chicks given to Sharon by a friend. It looks like a place where you might get your passport photo taken, not a creative sanctuary working out the logistics of how to perform opera in 24 moving cars.

Routes, chapters, monitors

The 90-minute performance unfolds along three geographical routes that wind through downtown and the east side of Los Angeles. Each of those routes (red, yellow or green) will have a car with four audience members plus actors, singers



Emmett Zeffman and Constance Val / The Industry

THE INDUSTRY'S CENTRAL HUB, the heart of "Hopscotch," is in a temporary structure in the Southern California Institute of Architecture parking lot.

audience members plus actors, singers and musicians performing along the way and at sites where cars stop during the show. Each route is divided into 10-minute chapters, all taking place in different cars, so there is quite a bit of changing vehicles.

The chapters are presented in non-chronological groups of eight, so no route contains the entirety of the show, but each route stands alone as a total experience.

Though space in the cars will be severely limited, all of these chapters, plus some additional ones featuring the animation of six artists, can be seen at the "central hub": a temporary structure on the Southern California Institute of Architecture's parking lot in downtown L.A. (In keeping with the car theme, SCI-Arc faculty members Constance Vale and Emmett Zeffman designed the central hub out of recycled billboard vinyl.)

Inside, 24 monitors will be arranged in a circle with benches. Admittance will be free and open to as many as 180 people first come, first served. Each of the car-based 24 chapters will be streamed to the hub, and audience members will choose which to hear using hi-fi headphones. At the end of each day (three shows per day will be scheduled), all 24 cars will arrive at the central hub for a grand finale.

Got it?
"When I tell people some of the logistic details, their heads start spinning," Sharon says, laughing.

Watching him in this tiny office, with its distinct lack of technical prowess, it's easy to wonder if he isn't just making this up. "Hopscotch" is something of a fantasy, one



ROXANA BENTU / The Industry

AN ANIMATION STILL of the 36-chapter production's route (24 chapters done live in cars) that runs through downtown and some streets just to the east.

concocted more than two years ago. A relentless fundraising drive brought in nearly \$700,000 from foundations and individual support. An additional \$300,000 is expected from ticket sales, which start Wednesday.

"Hopscotch" is a modern retelling of Orpheus and Eurydice, the tragic love of Orpheus, son of the muse Calliope, for his wife, Eurydice, whom he follows to the underworld with his lyre in an ill-fated attempt to return her to life.

Sharon's version is set in L.A. and fea-

tures a Latina protagonist named Lucha. The music, which is modern opera reflecting both the sunny hues and noir underpinnings of its chosen city, has been written by six Los Angeles composers — Veronika Kausas, Marc Lowenstein, Andrew McIntosh, Andrew Norman, Ellen Reid and David Rosenboom.

In May donors and potential donors were treated to a sneak peek of the opera and festivities included a stop at singer-songwriter Michelle Shocked's art-filled downtown loft.

"When I saw 'Invisible Cities' at Union Station I was transformed," Shocked says. "I found Yuval and said, 'You've got to let me in.'"

Shocked is featured in "Hopscotch" alongside a cast of 122 other musicians, singers and actors.

The opera also includes a production team of 94 — stage managers, costume designers, audio advisors, technology coordinators and more, says production manager Ash Nichols, an upbeat young woman of relentless energy.

Nichols is overseeing technical details, including the complicated issue of the cars, provided by Wilshire Limousine Services. Three models will be employed to chauffeur cast and audience from site to site. Michael Kushner, vice president of operations, has volunteered to have his drivers wear costumes if need be.

"For the most part we're not doing anything out of the ordinary on the streets," Nichols says. "What's unusual is what's happening inside the cars."

Kushner has also helped to figure out which limo should be paired with which chapter, since some passages of the opera have more complicated audio and power requirements than others. Production designer Thompson and lead AV technician Edward Carlson are making sure live-streaming to the central hub goes off without a hitch. Sometimes the camera in the limo will be stationary, and at other times audience members will be invited to wield it.

"We're so used to this idea of double-looking as a culture," Thompson says. "People watch rock concerts through their phones."

The way we consume culture as a society, whether we are informing our reality through camera phones or other devices, is part of what motivates Sharon and the Industry.

In one of the many testing phases for "Hopscotch," Thompson drove around the city with an opera singer in his back seat. ("It's like a car commercial, it's the best!" he says.) The team behind "Hopscotch" wants to know if audience members will see the city differently when they don't know where they're going, and it's fascinated with how the other half of the audience — the incidental, nonticket-buying audience, the passersby — will react to the show.

"This isn't complete until you have an audience that has paid and knows what they're in for and an audience that doesn't

even know this exists," executive director Elizabeth Cline says. "That's when the art really happens."

The Industry worked closely with Aram Sahakian, who oversees special traffic operations at the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, to make sure that the driving routes would not require closures or police presence, both of which Sharon says would ruin the spirit of the show.

"I can't imagine another city that would be so supportive and cooperative in making this happen," Sharon says.

At their first meeting, Sahakian said that after the I-405 closure known as "Carmageddon," anything is possible. Compared with that or with the bike festival CicLAvia, "Hopscotch" is child's play. The Industry presented the DOT with the routes it wanted to travel, and the DOT presented the group with workable maps. (The Industry is not revealing specifics of the routes, saying that the less the audience knows the better.)

"I'm proud of this celebration of our city. These routes show off the depth and history of this place, they show how diverse our communities are and how much art there is on the street," co-costume designer Ann Closs-Parley says. "It also gives you the opportunity to enjoy the ride, and I don't know how many people go for a ride in Los Angeles anymore."

Adds Sharon, "With no destination in mind, just for the freedom of the open road."

jessica.gelt@latimes.com

FALL ARTS HIGHLIGHTS

THEATER

OCT. 4-NOV. 1
'Appropriate'

West Coast premiere of Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' Arkansas-set drama about estranged siblings reunited by the passing of the family patriarch.

Mark Taper Forum, 135 N. Grand Ave., L.A. \$25-\$85. (213) 628-2772. www.centertheatregroup.org

OCT. 8-11
'Desdemona'

CAP UCLA presents the L.A. premiere of Nobel Prize-winning novelist Toni Morrison and Mallan singer-songwriter Rokia Traoré's play with music about the ill-fated beauty from Shakespeare's "Othello," directed by Peter Sellars and starring Broadway's Tina Benko.

UCLA Freud Playhouse, 405 Hilgard Ave., Westwood. \$69-\$89. (310) 825-2101. www.cap.ucla.edu

OCT. 14-NOV. 15
'Guards at the Taj'

West Coast premiere of "Bengal Tiger at the Zoo" playwright Rajiv Joseph's darkly comic fable, set in 17th century India, about



DIMITRIOS KAMBOURIS WireImage/Getty Images
TINA BENKO will star in "Desdemona."

two men tasked with guarding the newly constructed Taj Mahal.

Geffen Playhouse, Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater, 10886 Le Conte Ave., Westwood. \$60-\$82. (310) 208-5454. www.geffenplayhouse.com

OCT. 18-NOV. 8
'Kansas City Choir Boy'

Composer-performer Todd Almond and singer-actress Courtney Love star in the West Coast premiere of Almond's mythologically informed musical

drama about love and loss. Kirk Douglas Theatre, 9820 Washington Blvd., Culver City. \$25-\$70. (213) 628-2772. www.centertheatregroup.org

NOV. 18-DEC. 20
'Outside Mullingar'

Love blooms between lifelong neighbors in the Irish countryside in Tony-winner John Patrick Shanley's romantic comedy.

Geffen Playhouse, Gil Cates Theater, 10886 Le Conte Ave., Westwood. \$32-\$76. (310) 208-5454. www.geffenplayhouse.com

DEC. 4-20
'Guys and Dolls'

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival stages this classic musical based on Damon Runyon's tales of gamblers, gangsters, showgirls and others in 1940s New York City.

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Bram Goldsmith Theater, 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills. \$29-\$110. (310) 746-4000. www.thewallis.org

— CHARLES MCNULTY



JAMES MATTHEW DANIEL Center Theatre Group
COURTNEY LOVE and Todd Almond in Almond's "Kansas City Choir Boy."

CLASSICAL

SEPT. 16-26
'Das Rheingold'

As part of the Ruhrtriennale, theater director Johan Simons and conductor Teodor Currentzis join forces for a new, electronic-music-enhanced staging of the first entry in Wagner's "Ring" cycle, presented in a converted factory.

Jahrhunderthalle Bochum, Gahlensche Strasse 15, Bochum, Germany. 20-95 Euro. +49 (0) 221 230 210. www.ruhrtriennale.de

OCT. 1-11
'Immortal Beethoven'

Gustavo Dudamel leads the L.A. Phil, alternating with his Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela, through two cycles of all nine of Beethoven's symphonies. Both orchestras plus the Los Angeles Master Chorale and a cohort of singers share the stage for the Ninth.

Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., L.A. \$60-\$213.50. (323) 850-2000. www.laphil.com

OCT. 2-10
'uCarmen'

South Africa's Isango Ensemble, seen here last year in a re-imagining of Mozart's "The Magic Flute," returns with a supernatural spin on Bizet's "Carmen."

The Broad Stage, 1310 11th St., Santa Monica. \$50-\$100. (310) 434-3200. www.thebroadstage.com

OCT. 8-11
'Songs From the Uproar'

LA Opera presents the West Coast premiere of Brooklyn-based composer Missy Mazzoli's new multimedia work inspired by Swiss adventurer Isabelle Eberhardt's journals about her time in Africa.

REDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., L.A. \$69. (213) 972-8001. www.laopera.org



DAVIE J. HOGAN Getty Images
DANIELLE de Niese will perform "Bel Canto."

OCT. 31-NOV. 15
'Hopscotch'

The Industry, the company that brought its "Invisible Cities" to Union Station in 2013, offers a "car opera," created by six L.A.-based composers, that takes place in automobiles driving around the city.

Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc), 960 E. 3rd St., L.A. \$25-\$155; packages, \$500; free, no ticket required, at central hub at SCI-Arc. (213) 626-0750. www.hopscotchopera.com

NOV. 7
'Kaija Saariaho: A Portrait Concert'

CAP UCLA's survey of the Finnish composer's chamber music is augmented by visuals created by her husband, composer and multimedia artist Jean-Baptiste Barrière.

Schoenberg Hall, UCLA, 445 Charles E. Young Drive East, Westwood. \$29-\$39. (310) 825-2101. www.cap.ucla.edu

NOV. 12
Mahan Esfahani

The Iranian-born harpsichord virtuoso and members of Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra play pieces by Bach, Telemann and Eribach to kick off LACO's annual Baroque Conversations series.

Zipper Concert Hall, the Colburn School, 200 S. Grand Ave., L.A. \$57 and up. (213) 622-7001. www.laco.org

NOV. 21-22
Tod Machover's Symphony in D

Leonard Slatkin and the Detroit Symphony present Machover's collaborative, multimedia work that seeks to capture the spirit of Detroit by incorporating sonic ideas submitted by the city's residents.

Orchestra Hall, Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. \$15-\$100. Webcast live on Nov. 21. (313) 576-5111. www.dso.org

DEC. 7-JAN. 17
Jimmy Lopez's 'Bel Canto'

Soprano Danielle de Niese joins Chicago Lyric Opera for the world premiere of Lopez's adaptation of Ann Patchett's bestseller about international VIPs held hostage by terrorists at a private residence in Peru; in Spanish, English, Japanese, Russian, German, French, Latin and Quechua, with English super-titles.

Civic Opera House, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Chicago. \$20-\$299. (312) 827-5600. www.lyricopera.com

— MARK SWED

Los Angeles Times

October 8, 2015

Also ran online:

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-hopscotch-opera-industry-20151008-story.html>



JENNA SCHOENEFELD For The Times

Mobile, 'asphalt opera' for L.A.

Twenty-four cars wired with cameras take to the city's streets in "Hopscotch," a search for the center — in life and in Los Angeles itself. **CALENDAR**

L.A. civic life? We're too busy

Angelenos too stressed with work, traffic and chores to get more involved in communities, poll finds. **CALIFORNIA**

Weather:
Cloudy.
L.A. Basin: 89/70. **B7**



7 85944 00200 5

Los Angeles Times

E

CALENDAR

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2015 # LATIMES.COM/CALENDAR



Photographs by JENNA SCHOENFELD For The Times

FALL TV SEASON |
REVIEW

'Red Oaks' a solid set

The Amazon series that plays out at an '80s suburban country club is smart and fun.

ROBERT LLOYD
TELEVISION CRITIC

In the Amazon Studios way of doing things, pilots are posted for public perusal long before they go to series; and so we became acquainted some months back with the promising first episode of a comedy called "Red Oaks"; nine more episodes have now come along to build on that promise, and to better it.

A coming-of-age story set in the 1980s — made somewhat, sometimes, in the manner of a coming-of-age story made in the 1960s — its full run becomes available to stream early Friday for subscribers to Amazon Prime. The series was created by Gregory Jacobs, Steven Soderbergh's longtime producer [See 'Red Oaks,' E6]

'Asphalt opera' hits the streets

That singer on the roof, that limo pulling up next to you may just be part of 'Hopscotch'

By JESSICA GELT

It's 11 a.m. and the October air breathes the chill of fall. You wait with a friend and two strangers in front of a loft building on the industrial outskirts of downtown Los Angeles. It's been raining all night and the streets are shark-back slick. Pouty cumulous clouds threaten a fresh outburst when a black limo pulls up. A woman in white gloves opens the back door and gestures to get in. You do, even though you have no idea who she is or where you're going.

This isn't a dream. It's the first public preview performance this week of the new mobile opera "Hopscotch," which takes place in 24 cars on the roads of Los Angeles. Staged by the avant-garde opera company the Industry and directed by artistic director Yuval Sharon, "Hopscotch" [See Opera, E4]



A LIMO SCENE featuring Rusty Kennedy, left, and Alfredo Lopez.

N.W.A., Lobos receive nods

Other rock hall nominees include Janet Jackson, Yes, the Cars and the J.B.'s.

By RANDY LEWIS

The groundbreaking gangsta rap of N.W.A, the catholic pan-American rock of Los Lobos, the expansive progressive rock of Yes and the boundary-stretching R&B of Janet Jackson have earned each of those acts a shot at induction next year into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, which has announced its field of 15 nominees.

The field also includes Chicago, Cheap Trick, Deep Purple, the Cars, Chaka Khan, Chic, Steve Miller, Nine Inch Nails, the Smiths, the Spinners and James Brown's backing band, the J.B.'s.

Just over half of the year's field are first-time nominees, including East L.A.'s Los Lobos, which recently



JENNA SCHOENFELD For The Times
A PASSIONATE SCENE unfolds in Boyle Heights' Hollenbeck Park featuring Sarah Beaty and Victor Mazzone and their casually staged musical accompaniment.

'Hopscotch' takes to the streets

[Opera, from E1] is the follow-up to the group's critically lauded 2013 opera "Invisible Cities," which transpired inside bustling Union Station while visitors listened on wireless headphones.

Inside the "Hopscotch" limo sits a young Latina woman dressed in yellow. Her name is Lucha, and she's clearly distressed. She holds the receiver of an old-school rotary phone to her ear listening to a strange voice croon a riddle about her future. Wild instrumental music blares from speakers. Occasionally Lucha harmonizes a reply to the voice. She sings of loss and longing. She has lost so much in her short life, at least so she tells you. This is just the first chapter, so it's hard yet to grasp the plot of this strange tale.

The limo drives on, past bodegas, police cars, taco stands, *lavanderias*, *panaderias* and bus stops. You are in Boyle Heights, on the east side of L.A. The limo stops at red lights, and when it does you see the pedestrian routines of a Sunday morning. Couples stroll hand in hand holding hot coffee, old men walk dogs and children breeze past on scooters. They are unwitting performers in the show.

You transfer from limo to limo at the silent behest of more mute, white-gloved chauffeurs. The nonsequential chapters of the story play out — some with live singing and instrumentation, others with recorded music and still others in complete darkness. It's disorienting. Have you already passed this freeway entrance? Have you gone through this underpass? Traffic is picking up on the

I-5, its monotonous buzz cutting through the music inside the limo.

You end up in a car with a much younger Lucha. You are learning the story of her early life in Los Angeles. She is 15 and celebrating her quinceañera. The cup holders are overflowing with Starburst candy, and the sink is flush with ripe oranges. Two guitarists play an upbeat tune as you exit Mariachi Square while mariachis not in the show sit at outdoor tables eating *menudo*, starting with interest as the car drives away.

"*Ahora, soy una mujer*" ("Now, I am a woman") the young Lucha sings. You think of all the sorrow she will experience later in life, and you suddenly feel like crying.

But before you can, you're shepherded down a path at Hollenbeck Park, where two lovers serenade each other and an ice cream vendor plays percussion on his humble cart. Men in dapper blue suits blow on a saxophone and a tuba beside the lake where the lovers first kiss. An angry goose on the water honks its contribution to the scene.

Laying out the plan

At an early rehearsal for "Hopscotch" last month, Sharon gathered the cast of 123 musicians, singers and actors to explain the project. It has 24 live chapters, performed in groups of eight over the course of 90 minutes along one of three routes. A projector behind him displayed a hand-drawn thematic map of the show featuring intersecting bubbles leading to one central bubble labeled "Love."

"Hopscotch" is about the search for a center, Sharon



GINA FERRAZZI Los Angeles Times

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Yuval Sharon works with his crew during rehearsals for the production.

said, in life and in L.A. itself. It is about understanding existence as a "continuous and disjointed experience."

The same can be said of the audience experience of "Hopscotch," which lulls its participants into a fantastical trance-like state in which dramatic possibilities are as plentiful as musical notes and trumpeters take their places on downtown rooftops to play mournful ballads from afar. Where plywood cars collide with plywood motorcycles, their drivers frozen in a tableau of fear and regret, while boys bike by and homeless men push their carts past, unaware of the operatic drama.

"Where else are you going to perform an opera?" one bystander asked wryly while watching a rehearsal last month in a vacant lot strewn with broken glass.

This is "asphalt opera," costume designer Ann Closs-Farley said at the four-hour rehearsal, the only time this particular chapter was run through before the inaugural dress rehearsal last Saturday and the first preview performance last Sunday.

"Knock on wood, it seemed like it was totally impossible," Closs-Farley said of the show's premise. "Turns out it's totally possible."

That's because Sharon doesn't ask why. He asks only, "Why not?"

Why not wire 24 limos with cameras and audio equipment? Why not live-stream the action to a central hub outfitted with 24 screens in the round, so the public can watch free? After all, with only four audience members inside each limo, tickets to this immersive extravaganza, which officially opens Oct. 31 and runs weekends through Nov. 15, are pretty limited.

Sharon is a bit like Peter Pan, a mischievous boy who despite spearheading one of the country's most daring opera companies and recently being appointed artist-collaborator to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, has never grown up.

He laughs all the time, he hugs his actors, he makes goofy jokes in the middle of rehearsal. He pulls out toy cars and maneuvers them on hand-drawn roads on

'Hopscotch'

Where: Live performances in vehicles driving three routes through downtown and the east side of Los Angeles (meeting points given with purchase of tickets). Live-streaming monitors on view at Central Hub, in a parking lot at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, 960 E. 3rd St., Los Angeles

When: 10:45 a.m., 12:45 and 2:45 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays, Oct. 31 through Nov. 15. (Previews Oct. 11, 24 and 25.)

Tickets: \$125 for a vehicle seat in the 10:45 or 12:45 performances; \$155 for a vehicle seat in the 2:45 show, which includes a grand finale at the Central Hub. Admission to the live-streaming monitors at the Central Hub is free and limited to 180 people, first come, first served.

Info: hopscotchopera.com

white school paper to demonstrate the complicated pickup and drop-off routines for the show. "Vroom" is his favorite adjective, noun and verb.

"I can't believe this. This is so cool!" he exclaimed the first time he watched Chapter 2 unfold from a limo window while beat-boxing harpist Phillip King played the score on the seat beside him.

Then, like a precocious child, Sharon suddenly turned serious and wise.

"This show is about the practice of life," he said after a cast member's microphone shrieked feedback and cut out. "Life throws things at you all the time."

The key to making "Hop-

scotch" a success is to roll with any technical glitches that arise and to literally drive on.

Ready for anything

"I would say that it's more common for things to go wrong than for things to go as expected," production manager Ash Nichols said of rehearsals. "The show is a living, breathing thing, and you have to treat it like that. It has its own temperament, personality and tendencies."

Nichols' point proves true during the first public preview last Sunday, when it's clear the problematic microphone from rehearsal still has not been fixed. This time instead of feeding back, there is no sound at all.

But if audience members didn't know better, they would just think that they weren't meant to hear the exchange between characters who fight over the cause of a car crash and ultimately fall in love. The harpist in the car fills your ears, and the wailing of a real ambulance nearby is a fitting — and happy — accident.

The remaining scenes flow together like poetry from the Greek myth of Orpheus and his lost wife, Eurydice, upon which this modern fairy tale is based. But it won't do to list them all. The industry has worked hard to protect the details of the three "Hopscotch" routes and the chapters they contain. Mystery is the mechanism that best spins the wheels of the story.

As Sharon told his cast during the first rehearsal, quoting an Irish favorite poet: "May the road rise to meet you."

jessica.gelt@latimes.com

Los Angeles Times

November 21, 2015

Also ran online: <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-hopscotch-hawthorne-20151121-column.html>

A window into L.A.'s complex allure

Downtown's potential and potency are front and center in mobile opera 'Hopscotch.'

CHRISTOPHER HAWTHORNE
ARCHITECTURE
CRITIC

Does Los Angeles need a true center, a downtown in the traditional sense? How about a reasonable facsimile of one, something just plausible enough to fool the visitors from out of town? Would that do the trick?

These questions, typically bouncing from sincerity to exasperation and back again, have preoccupied writers, planners, architects

and civic boosters for nearly a century. They also play a pivotal role in shaping the wildly inventive, logistically miraculous "Hopscotch," a mobile opera that will wrap up an extended run this weekend.

In the end, as a matter of fact, it's the production's thoughtful ambivalence about the complicated role downtown plays in Los Angeles — and how that role has shifted in recent years, with the rise of the lifestyle brand and gentrification juggernaut known as #DTLA — that helps salvage its reading of the city as a whole.

Produced by the Industry, a 5-year-old, experimentally minded Los Angeles opera company, "Hopscotch" is performed on

three simultaneous color-coded routes. Its scenes take place both out in the city (on rooftops, in parks and plazas and along the Los Angeles River) and inside a rolling fleet of 24 limousines, which carry four audience members at a time alongside one or two performers.

The opera takes its name from a 1963 novel by Argentine writer Julio Cortázar, which is structured so that its chapters can be read in several different sequences. Instead of a table of contents, the book begins with a table of instructions.

"Hopscotch" has a similar curiosity about narrative structure, about how stories can be shuffled and reconfigured. Each group of four spectators experiences its [See 'Hopscotch,' E3]



ANNE CUBACK Los Angeles Times

"HOPSCOTCH'S" Peter Howard and Stephen Beitler, on motorcycle, interact.

Driving home the draw of downtown

['Hopscotch,' from E1] own version of the opera, which follows a love affair between an artist named Lucha and a rebellious scientist named Jameson. The Industry's Yuval Sharon and his collaborators — including six L.A. composers and as many librettists — eagerly undermine the idea that there is one overarching, official edition.

The version I saw last weekend, along the Green Route, began in an Airstream trailer parked in the hills north of Dodger Stadium before moving through Chinatown, the edge of Glassell Park and a few sections of downtown. Other routes stop in Boyle Heights and at the Bradbury Building.

A generation ago an experimental production of this kind would likely have taken place in Venice or Santa Monica. These days the musicians, the actors, the neighborhoods in flux and (perhaps most important of all) the streets free enough of traffic to make it work are almost universally located east of La Brea Avenue.

Car culture

Though the opera as Sharon envisioned it simply would not have been possible without the limos, "Hopscotch" is not just enabled by cars. It is also about cars and car culture. McLuhan on wheels. The mode of transportation is the message.

"The project began as an exploration of how cars alter our perception of our city and ourselves," Sharon says in an interview in the "Hopscotch" program. "Cars can make L.A. feel so lonely, but they also offer freedom and possibility."

At one point Jameson drives up alongside one of the limos on a motorcycle and carries on a conversation via wireless microphone with the actor inside. The two characters trade homilies about how driving is a ticket to a sublime kind of independence but keeps us cocooned, separate from one another.

This part of the libretto reads like a mash-up of the



JENNA SCHOENFELD For The Times

MELINDA RICE adds musical accompaniment to a rooftop scene in "Hopscotch" as the downtown Los Angeles skyline looms ahead.



Photographs by ANNE CUSACK Los Angeles Times

STEPHEN BEITLER, left, and Micaela Taylor get into character (both as Jameson) on the Green Route of opera-on-wheels "Hopscotch."

another.

This part of the libretto reads like a mash-up of the 2004 Paul Haggis movie "Crash"; the 1969 film "Easy Rider"; and Reyner Banham's 1971 book, "Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies," which celebrates the roadways of Southern California as a blissful republic of their own called "Autopia."

Banham famously writes in "Four Ecologies" that he "learned to drive in order to read Los Angeles in the original." Though this take on the city is more than 40 years old, it underlies a good deal of "Hopscotch."

The city that the production cuts through, that comes in and out of focus as the opera progresses, makes a different set of claims. Unlike the city Banham fell in love with, contemporary L.A., as it rehabilitates its historic architecture and makes agonizingly slow improvements to its transit network and public realm, is best understood at close range and a deliberate pace.

The faster you go, the more smoothly the circular routes of "Hopscotch" spin, the more you miss. No quick drive-by will reveal the subtle but telling ways in which the remade Clifton's Cafeteria or Grand Central Market differ from the originals, for instance.

Range of ideas

To be fair, despite the tendency of "Hopscotch" to romanticize the private car and its place in Los Angeles civic culture, its structure is flexible enough to accommodate a range of other takes on the city. The opera is at its strongest when it operates as a generous and warmhearted primer on how many of the spaces of L.A., especially its public ones, are underused and full of potential.

In its best, most curious moments it recalls not Banham nor "Crash" but the gruff appeal of the Thom Andersen documentary "Los Angeles Plays Itself," the artwork of Ruben Ochoa, the essays of Esther McCoy and John Chase, the communal energy of CicLAvia and the words of writer David Kipen: "Los Angeles is like your brain. You only ever use 20% of it. But imagine if we used it all."

The experience of riding in one of the limousines also mirrors the growing variety of ways in which we encounter 21st century Los Angeles

STEPHEN BEITLER, left, and Micaela Taylor get into

not as solo drivers but as passengers; this is the common ground of the carpool, the Uber ride and the trip by bus or light rail. The shift from driver to passenger is also a shift from author or performer to spectator, from doing to watching, or from one kind of watching to another. "Hopscotch" touches on that idea in a range of fascinating ways.

A convergence

As the opera progresses, the pull of downtown, evident from the beginning, grows stronger. As the second-to-last scene begins, each of the limousines turns toward the Arts District.

On the Green Route, Lucha recites a string of hopes, goals and obligations — a combination of a prayer and mundane to-do list — as she sits in the front seat, looking out over the tallights on the 110. She reminds herself "to remember the present, to not forget everyone's names, to close the windows, to lock the doors, to get the mail." And she sings repeatedly, in a hesitant mantra, about trying "to find the center."

Her limousine, converging with all the others in a

circling of the high-end wagons, then pulls into a roofless temporary pavilion in the parking lot of the Southern California Institute of Architecture, in a low-rise section of downtown between the skyscrapers of Bunker Hill and the L.A. River. A show that has no single starting point goes out of its way to bring everybody together for the finale.

The pavilion, designed by SCI-Arc faculty members Constance Vale and Emmett Zeifman, is a version of a center, yes, but a contrived and fleeting one: a Potemkin civic commons.

For the Los Angeles of 2015, a city rediscovering the appeal of a vital downtown but reluctant to abandon all the ways it has historically thrived by being dispersed and polycentric — precisely by being different from other, older cities — that combination seems about right.

Even if the center cannot hold in Los Angeles, it's useful every once in a while to pretend it can, to act as if it might.

christopher.hawthorne
@latimes.com

THE MOST ACCLAIMED FILM OF THE YEAR

Newsweek. Alexander Nazaryan

"BY FAR, THE BEST MOVIE THIS YEAR."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. Joe Morgenstern

"FLAWLESS ACTING"

BY MICHAEL KEATON, RACHEL McADAMS AND MARK RUFFALO."



SPOTLIGHT FRESH 97% FRESH

HOLLYWOOD Arclight Cinemas at Sunset & Vine (323) 464-4226
L.A. / BEVERLY HILLS Pacific's The Grove Stadium 14 (323) 692-0829 #209
SHERMAN OAKS Arclight Cinemas at The Sherman Oaks Galleria (818) 501-0753
CENTURY CITY AMC Century City 15 amctheatres.com
SANTA MONICA AMC Santa Monica 7 amctheatres.com
WEST LOS ANGELES The Landmark at W. Pico & Westwood (310) 470-0492

AND AT THEATERS EVERYWHERE

ATTENTION AMPAS & GOLD MEMBERS: YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD AND PHOTO ID WILL ADMIT YOU AND ONE GUEST TO ANY PERFORMANCE BASED ON SEATING AVAILABLE. SEATING IS SUBJECT TO INDIVIDUAL DISTRIBUTIONS.

Los Angeles Times

December 13, 2015

Also ran online: <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-ca-cm-best-classical-music-2015-20151213-column.html>

MARK SWED

BEST OF 2015

Every year has its personality. This list of highlights is neither intentionally ordered nor haphazardly listed, but rather a stream of consciousness.

Van Beethoven: From Berlin to Beijing, Beethoven has had, for whatever reason (be it salability or spiritual sustenance), a very big year. The new year began with Michael Tilson Thomas' compelling Los Angeles Philharmonic performance of "Missa Solemnis." The fall season began with Gustavo Dudamel's Beethoven symphony cycle — shared by the L.A. Phil and Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela — that demonstrated a young conductor's profoundly deepening understanding of the composer. And the orchestra drove around SoCal via a souped-up van equipped with a virtual-reality display of Dudamel conducting Beethoven's Fifth in Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Limo opera: Meant to put opera literally on the downtown L.A. map, "Hopscotch" cruised operatic limousines through the city. Yuval Sharon's brilliantly engineered concoction of street theater, animation, video art, installation art, environmental art and, yes, the lyric stage, involved an impressive team of composers, librettists, theater people, tech people, drivers and the occasional stunt motorcyclist. Despite the annoying hype and aspects of slumming, "Hopscotch" compensated with thrills, surprisingly few spills and astonishing instants of beauty.



ANNE CUSACK Los Angeles Times

SINGER Quayla Bramble in "Hopscotch."

ing musical points of view, but together they have changed the way we think about music. A year of celebrations revealed striking commonality in the maximalist way Indian music and jazz opened Riley's compositional realm, as African and Indonesian music did Boulez's.

Old musickers of old music: After long absences, early-music specialists John Eliot Gardiner (born 1943) and William Christie (born 1944) brought their venerable ensembles to Southern California. Gardiner's Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists excavated the last bit of theatrical magic from Monteverdi's "1610 Vespers" and "L'Orfeo." Christie found magic in minor French works with his Les Arts Florissants ensemble at Disney Hall.

Rites of spring: Dudamel demonstrated with a volcanic "Rite of Spring" that his Stravinsky has grown as much as his Beethoven. At UCLA, choreographer Bill T. Jones presented a thoughtfully disruptive version of the ballet that



THE NEW YORKER

November 16, 2015

Opera on Location

A high-tech work of Wagnerian scale is being staged across Los Angeles.

BY ALEX ROSS



Parts of “Hopscotch” are staged inside a fleet of limousines. Other scenes take place on rooftops and in city parks. CREDIT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANGIE SMITH FOR THE NEW YORKER

Jonah Levy, a thirty-year-old trumpet player based in Los Angeles, has lately developed a curious weekend routine. On Saturday and Sunday mornings, he puts on a white shirt, a black tie, black pants, and a motorcycle jacket, and heads to the ETO Doors warehouse, in downtown L.A. He takes an elevator to the sixth floor and walks up a flight of stairs to the roof, where a disused water tower rises an additional fifty feet. Levy straps his trumpet case to his back and climbs the tower’s spindly, rusty ladder. He wears a safety harness, attaching clamps to the rungs, and uses weight-lifting gloves to avoid cutting his palms. At the top, he warms up on his piccolo trumpet, applies sunscreen, and takes in views that extend from the skyscrapers of downtown to the San Gabriel Mountains. Just after 11 A.M., he receives a message on a walkie-talkie. “The audience is approaching the elevator,” a voice says. A minute or so later, figures appear on the roof of the Toy Factory Lofts, about a thousand feet away. Levy launches into a four-minute solo: an extended trill, rat-a-tat patterns, eerie bent notes, mournful flourishes in the key of B-flat minor. On the distant side of the lofts, a trombonist answers him. Then Levy sits down in a folding chair and waits a few minutes, until the walkie-talkie crackles again. He performs this solo twenty-four times each day.

Levy is one of a hundred and twenty-six musicians, dancers, and actors participating in “Hopscotch,” a “mobile opera” that is running in L.A. until November 22nd. It is the creation of a company called the Industry, which has drawn notice for presenting experimental opera in unconventional spaces. “Hopscotch” is its most ambitious production, and one of the more complicated operatic enterprises to have been attempted since Richard Wagner staged “The Ring of the Nibelung,” over four days, in 1876. Audience members ride about in a fleet of limousines, witnessing scenes that take place both inside the vehicles and at designated sites. Three simultaneous routes crisscross eastern and downtown L.A. Six principal composers, six librettists, and a production team of nearly a hundred have collaborated on the project, which has a budget of about a million dollars. It is a combination of road trip, architecture tour, contemporary-music festival, and waking dream.

The title “Hopscotch” is borrowed from Julio Cortázar’s 1963 magic-realist novel, which invites the reader to navigate the text in nonlinear fashion. The opera’s itineraries also jump around in time, and, because of a system of staggered departure points, each group of limo passengers experiences the work in a different way. Fortunately, the story is simple enough so that you can easily follow what’s happening at any given point. It is a modern fable, with overtones of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice—and with the genders reversed. Lucha, an artist and puppeteer, marries a motorcycle-riding scientist named Jameson, who loses himself in esoteric research and disappears. Lucha hallucinates an encounter with him in the underworld. Unlike Orpheus, she overcomes her grief and finds happiness with Orlando, a fellow-puppeteer. In the Toy Factory Lofts scene, called “Farewell from the Rooftops,” Lucha achieves resolution. Jonah Levy is a fading image of the missing husband, his sombre costume identical to one worn by performers portraying Jameson elsewhere.

“Rooftops,” which has music by Ellen Reid and a text by Mandy Kahn, lasts about ten minutes. Upon arriving at the Toy Factory Lofts, you are greeted by Marja Kay, the singer playing Lucha in the scene, and by a violist. “I set you free, Jameson,” Kay sings, though restless viola patterns indicate lingering tension. (Nineteen women embody Lucha in the course of the opera, each wearing a yellow dress.) By the time you reach the roof, two French-horn players and a violinist have joined the group. Outside, you experience a thrilling expansion of visual and acoustic space: the ensemble mingles with the ambient rumble of traffic and helicopters. Kay points to the ETO Doors building, and Levy enters the fray, his music suggesting fanfares being pulled apart and blown away by the wind. Kay points in the opposite direction, cueing the trombone. Eventually, she bids farewell to the Jameson figures and descends the elevator in a buoyant mood. “I feel my powers now,” she sings. “This city is orchestral—I lift its baton.”

The phrase is an apt motto for “Hopscotch.” Scenes unfold on the steps of City Hall, in Chinatown Central Plaza, in Evergreen Cemetery, and at the Bradbury Building, the Gilded Age structure whose darkly opulent iron-and-marble atrium appears in “Blade Runner” and many other films. The topography ranges from the verdant summit of Elysian Park to the bleak concrete channel of the Los Angeles River.

The limo scenes are quieter, more intimate. You might be joined by a pensive, flute-playing Lucha or by guitarists who evoke the character’s Mexican background. At one decisive moment, though, the exterior world rushes in. You find yourself riding with the actor-playwright Peter Howard, who is portraying a real-estate developer. While musing on gentrification, he lowers a window and addresses a black-clad motorcyclist who is riding alongside the limo. “Hey, your tail-light is out!” he yells. “It’s dangerous!” The motorcyclist yells back, his voice carried to the

limo's speakers through a wireless mike: "You know what's *really* dangerous? Distracting a motorcyclist when he's on the road." The biker, performed virtuosically by Stephen Beitler, is another Jameson figure; he and the developer argue as you clutch the armrests. This is the rare opera that asks you to sign a legal waiver before the show begins.

The mastermind of this spectacle is the opera director Yuval Sharon, a thirty-six-year-old Chicago native, who moved to L.A. in 2010 and founded the Industry that year. He realizes that his current project, which took more than two years to pull together, could be seen as a daft undertaking. He told me, "An opera with a nonsequential plot that depends on cars arriving on time in L.A.? We've created a monster, but it's alive." He closed his eyes and gave an antic laugh.

Trim and curly-haired, and dressed habitually in jeans, a T-shirt, and a vintage Le Tigre track jacket, Sharon looks like a hip counsellor at a summer arts camp—albeit one who reveres Wagner and names Brecht's "The Life of Galileo" as his favorite play. (He plans to stage it on the beach in Santa Monica, beside a bonfire.) Tirelessly upbeat, he has a knack for charming his way through bureaucratic tangles. "Hopscotch" entailed conversations with the Department of Transportation, California Parks and Recreation, and the Army Corps of Engineers, not to mention the Toy Factory Lofts Homeowners Association. He persuaded city officials to have potholes paved over so that musicians would have a smoother ride. He has also had, so far, a fair amount of luck. Road closures and tieups have been minimal. El Niño, which is likely to bring drenching rains to L.A., has yet to arrive in earnest. No film crews have commandeered the Bradbury Building. And, the day before I attended a rehearsal, in mid-October, the Dodgers had lost to the Mets in the National League playoffs.

"I've never followed sports so closely in all my life!" Sharon said, laughing again. "My dad took me to games when I was young—I didn't get it." If the Dodgers had reached the World Series, they would have played at home on Halloween, the day that "Hopscotch" opened, and the opera's routes would have been mired in traffic.

We were at the Los Angeles River site, a former Union Pacific staging ground called the Bowtie Parcel, now an art park. The performers were rehearsing "Hades," the scene in which Lucha imagines Jameson in the underworld. "This is going to be the River Styx," Sharon told me, looking down at the gray-green stream, which flowed past scattered rocks and masses of vegetation. More than twenty people milled about, among them the venerable experimental composer David Rosenboom, who is the dean of the school of music at the California Institute of the Arts. For "Hades," he had composed a punchy, angular, R. & B.-inflected score, using an ensemble of three trumpeters and three percussionists. "Make it more rhythmically precise—more James Brown," he said to the musicians.

Sharon and his team had found a ready-made seating area: a folly-like enclosure at the top of the embankment, constructed from rusted steel frames. He told three singers portraying Styxian women to surround the structure. "Reach through the gaps in the frames," he said. "Icy fingers, grasping." He turned to the bass-baritone Patrick Blackwell, who was playing the Boatman of the Styx, and said, "Reach out your arms to make yourself look taller—tower over us." Rebekah Barton, who was this scene's Lucha, practiced throwing a knotted rope down to Nicholas LaGessee, the Jameson, who was by the river. Sharon voiced Jameson's feelings: "A rope out of Hell? Can this be?" You should be doubting, unsure."

The director lowered himself to the riverbed to confer with LaGessee, who was holding a battered suitcase containing a speaker that was supposed to transmit his voice to the audience above. “It’s kind of muffled,” Sharon said. “What if we drilled holes in it?” The show’s production designer, Jason H. Thompson—who gave Sharon the idea for an opera partly set in cars—began perforating the suitcase. The percussionists tried out sounds, running drumsticks along a barbed-wire fence. Barton practiced throwing the Boatman’s oar. Ash Nichols, the production manager, and Casey Kringlen, the assistant director, spoke with the limo driver, who was doubtful about navigating a narrow, bumpy access road. Twenty-six drivers, all from Wilshire Limousine Services, were rehearsing as carefully as the musicians.

By the time I saw “Hades” in performance, it had become a tightly structured episode. The Boatman wore a white suit and a gold *lucha libre* mask, and the river women wove around him in flowing black costumes. The percussionists and the trumpeters were outfitted with gray suits and sunglasses, like members of Hell’s marching band. The problem of the access road had been solved: the driver, Bob Gezalyan, now commanded a Jeep, which handled the bumps and troughs with ease. Barton stood in the back of the vehicle, singing into the onrushing air, “How do I start over again?” A man fishing on the river whistled as we sped by. The scene is brief but intense, like the kind of dream one has after hitting the snooze button.

Sharon’s father, an Israeli nuclear engineer named Ariel Sharon, failed to interest his son in sports, but he did instill a love for opera. In the seventies, Ariel studied at Northwestern University, and he eventually settled in Chicago with his wife, Mali, a high-school social worker. “My dad took me to see Wagner’s ‘Siegfried’ at the Chicago Lyric Opera when I was thirteen,” Yuval said, at a café in Echo Park, near where he lives. “I remember enjoying the first two acts, with the sword and the dragon, but the third act was horrific—a man and a woman screaming at each other about love. Now that’s my favorite part of the ‘Ring.’ My dad got into Wagner in the course of travelling to Germany for work. Talking about Wagner is sort of the German equivalent of golfing.” Ariel Sharon died in 2011, just before his son began to develop a reputation as an opera director. Yuval strongly felt his father’s absence last year, when he directed a heralded staging of John Adams’s “Doctor Atomic” in Karlsruhe.

Sharon attended the University of California at Berkeley, studying literature and dramatic arts, and he was contemplating a career in film when he happened to see Alban Berg’s “Wozzeck,” in San Francisco. “I’d studied the work beforehand and was prepared for this amazing, visceral, powerful experience, and it was so lame and so flat,” he said. “I looked around at the audience and thought, Nobody cares. They’re just relieved that it’s going to be short. I realized that it was the production, not the age of the piece or the nature of its language, that was keeping the gates closed. And I wondered, what would happen if you treated this as actual theatre?”

After graduating, in 2001, Sharon served as an assistant on several productions in Germany and Austria. In 2003, he took a job at New York City Opera, and later ran its new-opera workshop, VOX. In 2009, the L.A. Opera invited Sharon to assist the German director Achim Freyer, a Brecht protégé, on a staging of the “Ring”—a bold and costly undertaking, dominated by giant puppet figures, that left many operagoers baffled. Sharon, though, felt that the response was warmer than it might have been elsewhere, not least at the Met. He let go of Hollywood-centered images of L.A. and set about exploring the city’s chaotically intersecting cultures. Fascinated by the great European emigration to Southern California in the period of the Second World War, he made a pilgrimage to the Villa Aurora, the former home of the novelist Lion Feuchtwanger, where Brecht socialized alongside Charles Laughton and Charlie Chaplin.

“There was a deliberate irony in calling our company the Industry,” Sharon said. “It’s an alternate version of the local reality.” From the start, the company’s productions stood out for their daunting complexity. First came a staging of Anne LeBaron’s “Crescent City,” a phantasmagoric story of post-Katrina New Orleans. Within a cavernous warehouse, audiences chose their own paths among multiple stages. In 2013, the Industry presented Christopher Cerrone’s “Invisible Cities,” an adaptation of the Italo Calvino novel in which Union Station became the stage: performers made their way around unsuspecting commuters as audience members listened on wireless headphones.

This kind of thing has, of course, been done before. Sharon cites, as models, the happenings of Allan Kaprow and the Situationism of Guy Debord, who devised wayward city tours in search of the “liberation of everyday life.” The Industry’s productions also owe much to the site-specific theatre of recent decades, such as the Punchdrunk company’s “Sleep No More,” in which theatregoers roam multistory spaces. There have been taxi plays, elevator plays, subway plays. And there have been site-specific operas, though nothing on the scale of “Hopscotch.”

“Some people wonder why we’re still calling this opera,” Sharon told me. “They say, ‘Why not just ditch that word, since it’s your biggest baggage?’ People hear it and think inaccessible. But people need to realize that what we’re doing is an extension of this very old layering of word and music and image. We may be pretty far from Mozart and Verdi, but we’re certainly connected to the avant-garde tradition of Cage and Partch and Stockhausen.” At the Birmingham Opera, in 2012, Sharon served as an associate director for Graham Vick’s grandly surreal production of Stockhausen’s “Mittwoch aus Licht,” which requires a string quartet to fly in helicopters.

“And, yes, there’s a little bit of the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*,” Sharon went on, wincing at the word, which drops clunkily into so many discussions of unconventional theatre. “The inspiration from that tradition is: instead of being cautious, instead of taking on some idea for a new opera that’s been cooked up by a marketing roundtable, let’s make it bigger, gutsier, more audacious, more borderline impossible.” In rehearsals, he quoted a slogan associated with the artist Banksy: “It’s not art unless it has the potential to be a disaster.”

“Hopscotch” is, beyond everything else, a feat of logistical planning. The three routes for the audience are labelled Red, Yellow, and Green; each lasts ninety minutes and is given three times a day. Viewers circulate according to an ingenious scheme that Sharon and Elizabeth Cline, the Industry’s executive director, worked out one night with an array of toy cars bought at a Little Tokyo market. Cline told me, “Like every element of ‘Hopscotch,’ we figured it out through conversation, testing, discovery, iterating.” The audience for a given route is divided into eight groups of four, half moving clockwise and half moving counterclockwise. Performers repeat their scenes as groups rotate in and out; the limos shuttle back and forth, trading passengers with the next car in the chain. Most viewers go on only one route; in theory, you could see all three in succession, but it would be an all too Wagnerian experience.

Sharon and his team arranged the scenes so that the viewer is in a state of perpetual transition. One moment, you’re cooped up in a limo with blacked-out windows, listening in claustrophobically close quarters; the next, you’re in a wide-open landscape, sound cascading from all directions. Each route has at least one awe-inspiring moment of emergence. On the Red Route, it is “Rooftops”; on the Green Route, it is “Hades.” The tour de force of the Yellow Route takes place in the Bradbury Building. It is another of Lucha’s hallucinations, one in which she

pictures Jameson with a Lady in Red. Veronika Krausas, an Australian-born, Canadian-raised composer who teaches at U.S.C., pays homage to the building's cinematic associations with a seductively noirish, jazz-tinged score, including a violent drum improvisation and seething lines for an ambulatory saxophone. You ride the Bradbury's open-cage elevator to the top level of the atrium, whereupon Lucha—here portrayed by the Iranian-born coloratura soprano Delaram Kamareh—makes her way down five stories of stairs. Dancers from a local company, Ate9, dart up and down, fleshing out the surreal image. Toward the end, a sensuous guitar song floats through the reverberant space.

Repeatedly, the staged action merges with the life of the city. Tourists who have been admitted to the Bradbury's ground floor gaze up at the cryptic doings above, filming the performers on their mobile phones. Customers at Burgerlords, in Chinatown, attempt to digest what they are seeing as they nibble on their fries. During a scene set in Hollenbeck Park, a young woman who had just been married, in a flamboyant purple dress, wandered into the background, seeming at first glance to be an extra. Sometimes, though, a bystander turns out to be a player in the drama: at Hollenbeck Park, a man at an ice-cream cart turns into a percussionist. The composer Marc Lowenstein, who wrote a raptly lyrical score for that episode and also served as the production's music director, commented, "Everything that happens is part of the scene."

You always return to the limo, gazing through tinted glass. There "Hopscotch" takes on a more melancholy, alienated tone, as the music becomes the soundtrack to whatever you glimpse through the window: gasping joggers, barking businesspeople, homeless people pushing grocery carts, gleaming boutiques, a toilet inexplicably shattered on the side of the road. By design, you feel uneasy as you move around the city in vehicles associated with fame and wealth. Getting in and out, you are gawked at, until people realize that you are not famous.

"This piece is basically in love with L.A., but we didn't want it to be all rainbows and Disneyland," Sharon told me. "We don't want to hide the darkness of the city—the way people can, yes, disappear. And we want to include a sense of the isolation of driving—the emotional distance it can create. The plot aside, the piece is really a story about life in cars. What we've done is remove the sense of a destination—the tunnel vision that takes hold when you're trying to get somewhere. That completely transforms your experience of the street. All these new perceptions flood your system."

Before "Hopscotch" rehearsals began, I drove to El Sereno, east of downtown, to visit Andrew Norman, another of the six composers who created the main part of the score. All are based in Southern California, but only Norman grew up in the state. His father, an evangelical minister, led a church in Modesto; one of Norman's early musical experiences was playing keyboards in a church youth band. At the age of thirty-six, he has become much in demand for his furiously churning, finely structured orchestral pieces. For "Hopscotch," Norman had been asked to compose the Finale, which was to unfold at a central location called the Hub. At the end of each performance day, the limos would converge there, and musicians would emerge to perform together live.

Norman, who is blond and pale and given to wearing flannel shirts, composes in a converted garage next to the house that he shares with his partner, Alex Birkhold. A worktable was strewn with pieces in progress: he was in the middle of sketching the piano part of "Split," a concerto that Jeffrey Kahane and the New York Philharmonic will introduce in December. "My process involves a lot of nail-biting," Norman told me. "I get spells of writer's block, and there are

periods where I sketch gobs of material that doesn't cohere, and then, if all goes well, at the last possible second it all kind of—" He made a plosive sound and crunched his hands together. The works themselves often follow the same progression: atomized figures swirl about in a state of near-anarchy and then coalesce into solid, soaring forms.

Norman grinned in relief when he opened up a "Hopscotch" file on his computer. In place of the precise demands that accompany a major orchestral commission, the assignment here was almost absurdly open-ended. "Usually, I'm told, 'Twenty-two minutes, same instrumentation as a Mozart concerto,'" Norman explained. "In this case, the duration depends on traffic. Yuval has been driving around, trying to see how long it will take for every limousine to get to the Hub. He says that it might last anywhere from seven to twenty minutes. Also, it has to be simple enough that performers of various musical backgrounds can memorize it." Norman had decided to base the entire Finale on a scale of G major. As in Terry Riley's minimalist masterpiece "In C," modular melodies would harmonize with one another even as they traced separate paths.

The "Hopscotch" composers had to be comfortable with uncertainty. Ellen Reid, a native of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, who moved to L.A. in 2009 to study at CalArts, told me, "You're always trying to hit a literally moving target. Each piece has to be both coherent on its own terms and also flexible enough to fit shifting conditions, and you don't even know in advance what kind of flexibility will be required. At the last minute, a location or a route changes, and everything is different." In rehearsals of "Rooftops," Reid found that the sustained tones and trills she had written for Jonah Levy were getting lost in the rumbling soundscape, so she encouraged him to add figuration that scampered up and down in register.

Sharon sought a range of styles, not omitting the city's sizable musical underground. Andrew McIntosh, a thirty-year-old composer and a Baroque violinist who grew up in a small town on the edge of the Nevada desert, is one of a number of L.A. musicians who pay heed to the twentieth-century avant-garde, resisting stereotypes of the city as a domain of movie-score bombast. McIntosh co-owns a new-music label with the ironic name Populist Records; his first solo album is titled "Hyenas in the Temples of Pleasure." He was assigned a crucial pair of scenes in which Lucha and Jameson consummate their love and are married. In other hands, this material might have elicited lyrical effusions; McIntosh's spare, rarefied sonorities, which tilt away from traditional tunings, give an air of mythic otherness. His music for a quartet of saxophones has been wafting out from Angel's Point, in Elysian Park, and settling over the city like an invisible mist.

Some of the "Hopscotch" previews had wobbly moments; limos ran late, scenes were curtailed. By opening day, though, the routes were operating smoothly. As at a theme-park ride, one audience would emerge from a limo and another would step in seconds later. Sharon spent most of the day at the Hub, which occupies a corner of the parking lot at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, in the Arts District. Here, as if things weren't tricky enough, a new feature was being added: twenty-four video screens had been set up, each, in theory, carrying a live feed from a "Hopscotch" scene. The images came from audience members who had been handed mobile-phone cameras. Using technology provided by the Sennheiser company, visitors to the Hub could connect to audio channels and listen on headphones.

On the first day, many of the feeds had technical problems. The signal from the "Rooftops" scene cut out every time the party entered the elevator, and so a tape of a preview ran instead. (The second day went better.) But the Bradbury Building was broadcasting without interruption,

and its performers were in high spirits. Kamareh threw herself exuberantly about the space and embellished her coloratura runs with whoops and shrieks. “I could almost tell them to rein it a little, but I won’t,” Sharon commented. “It’s out of my hands now—all these scenes have taken on a life of their own.” The audience cinematographers were adding their own touches. Some dutifully followed the principals; others indulged in panning shots, closeups, and other filmic gestures. One person seemed concerned mainly with keeping a handsome companion in the frame. Repeatedly, there was an abrupt pan down to a pair of feet. Having handled a camera in one of the previews, I recognized this as the moment when the excited documentarian realizes that if he doesn’t watch his step he could plunge down the stairs.

The on-site performances ended at four-thirty, and the limos began collecting at the Hub. They pulled up one by one, in lanes on either side of the audience. As passengers emerged, they resembled arrivals at a Hollywood red-carpet event, except that the celebrities here were emissaries from the “Hopscotch” realm. Various Luchas stepped out, including the singer-songwriter Michelle Shocked, who, on the Yellow Route, evoked Lucha’s final happiness. Jamesons and Orlandos also mingled. All were singing or speaking phrases on the theme of mundane daily tasks: “Still needing to go to the market, to change the sheets, to do the dishes, to feed the cat.” Thus began Andrew Norman’s Finale. For a while, modular fragments swirled in a pleasant haze, but once all the limos had arrived a stronger compositional mechanism took over, moving toward a culminating idea: a pattern of intervals contracting on both ends, from a tenth to an octave to a sixth to a fourth to a second. The figure enacts in musical terms the idea of finding a center. Norman has supplied a gentle, mystical ending for a work that, amid its many moments of pure elation, is as disorienting and disquieting as the world in which it moves.

At a party after the opening, I found Jonah Levy, the trumpeter on the tower. He is a genial, regular-guy avant-gardist, a devotee of Stockhausen who once did a stint in a cruise-line show band. “I feel like the musical equivalent of a sniper,” he said. “Waiting on the top of a building until the ‘Go’ sign, then just laying down some freakishly fun and complex contemporary opera, and then disappearing.”

The metaphor captures the brazenness of “Hopscotch”: its way of impinging on daily life in an organized citywide assault. Many passersby react to the opera with a momentary perplexity that seems to fade as they walk on. Others become curious and ask questions. By the end of the run, thousands of Angelenos will have joined the piece’s accidental audience, which may turn out to be the more important one. Whatever the reaction, “Hopscotch” triumphantly escapes the genteel, fenced-off zone where opera is supposed to reside.

Ellen Reid came over to congratulate Levy on surviving another marathon and to marvel that the entire improbable scheme had come to pass. “The thing about Yuval is that he’s created his own reality,” Levy said. “He’s kind of our Walt Disney.” Levy left the party early in order to drive to Long Beach, where he had a gig playing in the pit band for a production of “My Fair Lady.” The next day, he was back on his tower, an assassin of the ordinary.

Link: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/11/16/opera-on-location>

Los Angeles

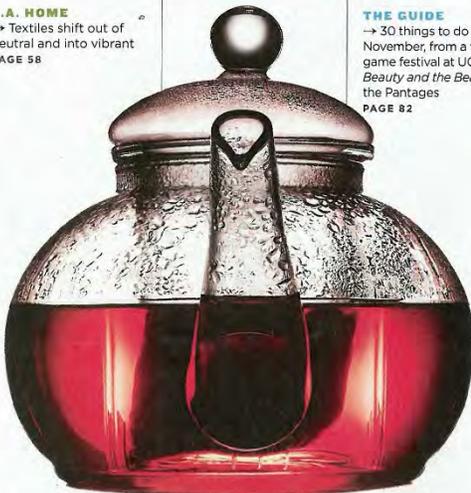
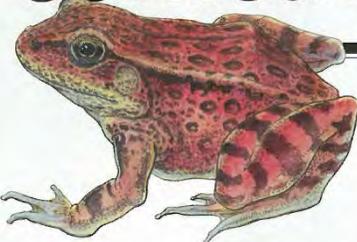
MAGAZINE

November 2015

Also ran online: <http://www.lamag.com/culturefiles/the-industry-is-bringing-a-guerilla-opera-to-the-streets-of-l-a/>

Los Angeles

DEPARTMENTS



(Eat)
SMALL BITES
→ No doilies here—local companies and a chic Arts District café are changing the face of tea, and a *poutine* palace pours on the gravy in Hollywood **PLUS:** The Bellwether brings experimentation (and yummy food and drink) to Studio City, and new restaurants Dudley Market and Baroo **PAGE 65**

DINING OUT
→ 142 of the city's best restaurants, from Church & State to Chianina Steakhouse **PAGE 162**

(Columns)
URBAN AFFAIRS
→ With customer discontent a constant and climate change in the air, DWP head Marcie Edwards has some challenges to tackle **BY MARC HAEFLE PAGE 86**

TV
→ Season two of FX's *Fargo* rewinds to the '70s for a series that's more insane than anything else on television **BY STEVE ERICKSON PAGE 94**

OPEN CITY
→ What to do when your twenties are a distant memory but your yearning to get down and boogie is stronger than ever **BY STACEY WOODS PAGE 100**

(Do)
CULTURE FILES
→ LACMA's *Rain Room* moves the downpour indoors; the Industry's experimental opera goes on the road; Vidiots celebrates 30 years **PLUS:** *Geeks Who Drink* host Zachary Levi talks Han Solo and his ultimate (fictional) trivia teammates **PAGE 71**

WEEKENDER
→ The rugged peaks of Banff, in Alberta, Canada, offer a quieter alternative to your typical ski town **PAGE 78**

THE GUIDE
→ 30 things to do in November, from a video game festival at UCLA to *Beauty and the Beast* at the Pantages **PAGE 82**

(Buzz)
CITYTHINK
→ With L.A.'s homelessness at a crisis point, some local residents are experimenting with DIY solutions; a peek at bold plans for new park space; a former blacklisted actress recounts Hollywood's anti-Communist hysteria; a near-extinct California amphibian returns to the Santa Monica Mountains **PAGE 25**

L.A. ARCHETYPE
→ A Metro paleontologist explains what she digs about her job **PAGE 30**

ASK CHRIS
→ Chris Nichols on how the bird of paradise took flight as the city's official flower **PAGE 32**

L.A. STORY
→ Brie Larson, the breakout star of the new film *Room*, talks DJ moonlighting, Hollywood Hills mansion partying, and hitting the dance floor with a certain sir **PAGE 34**

HOW L.A. WORKS
→ Tech-heavy trash cans will make our streets a lot cleaner—and smarter **PAGE 38**

(Shop)
FALL EVENINGWEAR
→ Blinged-out headbands, ear climbers, open-front chokers: "Fine jewelry" is redefined **PAGE 41**

THE TURNING POINT
→ Members of Los Angeles Ballet soar in breathtaking haute couture **PAGE 50**

L.A. HOME
→ Textiles shift out of neutral and into vibrant **PAGE 58**

EXTRAS

Editor's Note
→ For comedians, the toughest audience of all is often the one staring at them in the mirror, as a new book reveals **PAGE 14**

Dialogue
→ Readers show the love for cover girl Mindy Kaling **PLUS:** The Broad debut sparks a two-part discussion **PAGE 20**

Time Frame
→ Fred Hayman was hobnobbing with a celebrity clientele long before he established his Giorgio Beverly Hills **PAGE 208**

(COVER)
IN THE ROUND
Niman Ranch pork shoulder and beef brisket meatball from Jon & Vinny's Photograph by Dylan + Jeni

10 | LOS ANGELES
NOVEMBER 2015



MUSIC

Auto-Croon

A MOVING MUSICAL PRODUCTION RETHINKS THE MEANING OF CAR CULTURE

MOST OF US treat our rides like personal karaoke-mobiles—the free-ways are full of soloists belting out “Wrecking Ball” with insular abandon. On weekends from October 31 through November 15, the guerrilla opera company the Industry captures that sense of intimacy on a large scale with *Hopscotch*, a roving opera composed of 24 “chapters” performed inside 24 cruising stretch limousines. “We are creating a massive structure that we cannot control,” says Yuval Sharon, who left his post as project director of New York’s contemporary opera lab VOX to found the Industry in 2010. “It may be a train wreck—a limo wreck! But someone just told me, ‘It’s not art if it doesn’t have the potential to be a total disaster.’ And I think that is absolutely true.”

The group has courted chaos before—take 2014’s *Invisible Cities*, an “opera through headphones” performed inside downtown’s bustling Union Station. But

this new venture poses an even greater challenge for Sharon, who is also the Industry’s art director: In *Hopscotch* 150 cast members bring the work of 12 local composers and writers to life from the crowded confines of vehicles zigzagging through downtown and Eastside neighborhoods. Ticket buyers choose one of three driving routes, each with eight cars featuring a nonsequential portion of the opera (a package for the entire saga is also available). Singers and instrumentalists in each set of wheels stage a ten-minute scene, which takes place en route to another destination. A second limo holds the next installment of the story, and so the show goes for about 90 minutes. For the finale, all 24 limos converge on the Central Hub, a temporary structure in the parking lot of SCI-Arc.

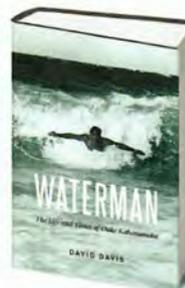
With such compact venues, seats are limited, but the Industry plans to live-stream the whole show from the Hub free of charge. “There is an incredibly open-minded, receptive audience here,” Sharon says of Los Angeles. “I could tell that this was going to be fertile soil for the kind of explorations I wanted to do.” ♦ M.W.

ROLL PLAYING
With *Hopscotch*, one opera company is taking theater to the streets



LITERARY CRITIC
DAVID KIPEN
ON WHAT’S CAUGHT
HIS EYE

→ A pioneer of surfing, swimming, and race relations, Duke Kahanamoku spent more time in Los Angeles than anywhere—but his native Hawaii. Now he’s found his ideal biographer in L.A.’s David Davis, arguably the best sportswriter to ply his trade hereabouts since Jim Murray (and a contributing writer for this magazine). Davis’s smartly titled new book, *Waterman*, tells the story of a man so at home in the ocean that he once fell asleep while scuba diving. Style-wise Davis is something of an even-keeled longboarder. He stays in the curl all the way from Kahanamoku’s tropical childhood through his Olympic triumphs, stereotypical film roles, goodwill ambassadorship, late happy marriage, and finally his ambivalent aloha to Oahu’s—and surfing’s—poor but pure early days. Kahanamoku’s life becomes a parable whose lesson I’ve just violated: Know what you love and shut up about it.



MY LA TO Z: JOHN C. REILLY

The actor stars in *Entertainment*, a film about a washed-up comedian who’s trying to revive his career, out November 13. “The **NETHERCUTT COLLECTION** has the best rare cars in the world, in an incredible setting. The museum also has automated musical instruments, phonographs, nickelodeons, and player piano-type contraptions. You can’t believe what they could make in the 1800s. It’s cool and unique to L.A.” » 15200 Bledsoe St., Sylmar, 818-364-6464 or nethercuttcollection.org.

October 2015

Moving Parts

L.A.'s most anticipated new opera takes place in cars— of course. Behind the scenes of Yuval Sharon's audacious logistical nightmare, "Hopscotch."

By Dan Crane

Illustrations by Pat Perry



One evening last September, in a living room in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Silver Lake, Yuval Sharon stood in front of a diagram of the city addressing a group of writers and composers who had assembled for their first production meeting. He was in the midst of describing L.A. as a place “where people can just disappear” when the doorbell rang.

“I can’t believe it,” said composer David Rosenboom as he entered. He was clearly fatigued. “I left home three and a half hours ago to attend a meeting about an opera to take place in L.A. in automobiles? And we expect people to buy tickets to do this on purpose?”

“Well, people have been saying it’s the first car ride they’re looking forward to,” Sharon offered.

Wiry, warm, and gregarious, the 35-year-old opera director is curly-haired and cleft-chinned. He tends to punctuate sentences with an eyes-closed laugh — particularly when explaining the quixotic absurdity of his latest endeavor, *Hopscotch*, a new “mobile opera” that will take place inside 24 limousines driven around Los Angeles, stopping at iconic locations along the way.

Hopscotch is Sharon’s follow-up to *Invisible Cities*, a groundbreaking roving opera staged in and around Los Angeles’s Union Station in late 2013, during which the audience donned wireless headphones and wandered among the train station’s inhabitants to track the opera’s singers and dancers. *Invisible Cities* was nominated for four L.A. Stage Alliance Ovation Awards and was a finalist for the 2014 Pulitzer Prize in music and the subject of an Emmy-winning documentary. The Los Angeles Times referred to the production as a “herculean act of coordination.” *Wired* asked: “Is this the opera of the future?”

Sharon is now betting he can top it with Hopscotch, which his team of six writers and six composers (as well as numerous designers, choreographers, musicians, and architects) has spent more than a year mapping out. It is by far the director's most ambitious and audacious project to date, one with infinite, uncontrollable variables (traffic, weather, and the Dodgers, just to name a few) that could scupper entire performances. Perhaps his biggest challenge has been explaining how the whole thing will work. "So, wait, this happens ... inside a car?" is a question he's fielded countless times.

For each Hopscotch performance, of which there will be three per day over three consecutive weekends starting October 31 (plus previews), attendees will be told to show up at their start time at an address along one of three colored routes. Once inside the limo, they will be driven, along with a handful of musicians, for about ten minutes. Throughout this approximately ten-minute "scene," which, yes, takes place inside a car, a vocalist may sing along with a prerecorded track playing on the car's stereo, or there could be two singers and an alto saxophone, or the car may drive by a quartet on the street and the sound will be piped into the limousine as it passes.

Hopscotch is a performance with infinite, uncontrollable variables (traffic, weather, and the Dodgers, just to name a few) that could scupper entire performances.

The audience won't be cooped up inside a single limousine throughout the opera. (Most of the performers will, however — repeating their scene 24 times per day.) Instead, at the end of each scene, the car will arrive at a location where the group will disembark to witness the next scene, which will take place in a public space. Once that concludes, the group will be ushered into a different limousine, inside which the next scene will unfold. Every scene, whether it takes place inside a car or outside, comes with a host of potential pitfalls.

"Are we expecting the performer to learn seven different routes' worth of pieces?" asked a befuddled composer at the production meeting.

"They are only ever learning one piece," answered Sharon. "The cars just go back and forth."

"If we have a scene in a car and the car gets stopped at a red light for an extra-long amount of time, what happens if the scene ends?" asked a composer.

"Vamping?" suggested another. Sharon advised that pieces be composed in a "modular" way to accommodate for unexpected delays, but there's always the chance that a vehicle will get trapped in an especially nasty traffic jam like the one that ensnared Rosenboom.

"This will be an extremely complicated project," Sharon acknowledged. "But won't it be amazing when we pull it off?"

WHEN HE WAS 13, Sharon traveled from Chicago to visit his father, a nuclear engineer, in Essen, Germany, where they went to see his first opera, *La Traviata*. "I thought it was so boring," said Sharon over coffee at an Echo Park café last fall. "Opera was a bizarre concert with costumes, and there was nothing theatrical about it. It was another language, another time." He was, he said, "way more into the cheesy '80s mega-musicals, like *Les Mis*, especially."

Though he began playing piano at age 3, Sharon never thought music would be a major part of his life. Then, in college, while studying film at Berkeley, he started attending opera performances. After witnessing a particularly disappointing production of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, he realized that it might be the presentation — rather than the genre itself — that was keeping opera from feeling relevant. He began studying theater and became interested in the work of experimental composers such as Steve

Reich, Philip Glass, and John Adams. He saw the potential for opera as an “emerging art form as opposed to an inherited, outmoded tradition.” He even came around to La Traviata.

Sharon spent four years working for VOX, New York City Opera’s contemporary workshop, and running his own company called Theater Faction before coming to L.A. in 2009 to work with Achim Freyer on his Ring cycle — an avant-garde, highly unconventional, extravagant production that reportedly cost \$31 million and that many saw as ill-considered coming in the middle of an economic downturn.

Today Sharon is the artistic director of The Industry, a Los Angeles–based opera company he founded in 2011 to “expand the traditional definition of opera.” The Industry has quickly garnered a formidable reputation. *Crescent City*, its inaugural production, was called “weirdly exuberant and wonderfully performed” by the Los Angeles Times, which named Sharon a “Face to Watch” in 2012.

But the company really established itself with *Invisible Cities*, an opera written by Christopher Cerrone based on the book by Italo Calvino. The show transformed Union Station into a living set piece in which confounded commuters navigated a performance that included dancers atop defunct ticket counters and a mesmerizing processional led by the character of Kublai Khan. Deborah Borda, president and CEO of the L.A. Philharmonic, which just appointed Sharon to a three-year residency, described *Invisible Cities* as a watershed moment. “It was a turning point for me in thinking about how we interact with audiences, how we present music, our entire concert format. Professionally, it was very close to a life-changing experience.” The L.A. Weekly wrote, “Let’s hope more American composers and librettists challenge audiences with wonderful, new theatrical experiences — as Cerrone and Sharon did — instead of spoon-feeding them known commodities adorned with arias and pretty music.”

Invisible Cities encountered so many impediments — from persuading officials to allow them to mount transmitting antennae throughout the station to avoiding radio frequency interference to training the actors to deal with audience members who tried to sing or dance along with them — that at one point Sharon was convinced the production wasn’t going to happen. That’s when the idea for *Hopscotch* began to percolate. He tried to imagine something exponentially more complex, something that would make *Invisible Cities* seem comparatively simple. Jason Thompson, who designed projections for a number of Industry operas, suggested a piece involving driving. This immediately clicked with Sharon, whose performances have often used L.A. as an integral element of the audience’s experience. And what, Sharon reasoned, could be more L.A. than an opera that takes place in a car? Instead of just one location, what if it took place in multiple cars and at multiple locations? Oddly enough, realizing what a nightmare such a production would be freed him to go back to Union Station and, as he described it, “do the headphone thing.”

Sharon knew that rather than adapting an existing opera, as he did with *Invisible Cities*, *Hopscotch* would have to be written from the ground up with the notion of riding around L.A. in a limousine expressly in mind. “Partially that’s logistical,” he said. “It’s thinking about what kind of instruments really can fit in a car, or that if you hit a bump you’re not going to knock out the trumpet player’s teeth.”

Nearly every audience member’s experience of *Hopscotch* will be different — Sharon said that “everyone will miss something; everyone will have a perfect view.” As a result, the story of *Hopscotch* is intended to be both simple and abstract: It’s a love story centered on the stages of loss, using the Orpheus and Eurydice myth as a thematic springboard.

Each chapter of the performance has presented its own obstacles. Andrew McIntosh, one of the composers charged with writing the music for *Hopscotch*, said that he initially conceived of one scene using a Fender Rhodes keyboard, which he described as “a beautiful old instrument from the early ’60s

to early '80s." It's also very heavy. "There's the issue of, is the car even wide enough to fit the keyboard? How to compensate for the possibility that the driver might slam the brakes? And what do you do with a 130-pound keyboard falling over on somebody's foot?" He worked on the scene for more than a year — only to abandon it a few months before the premiere to "more or less start over from scratch" with an electric guitar.



Composer David Rosenboom has been working on a chapter during which audience members will don headbands with "brain-sensing technology" made by Canadian company InteraXon. Different sounds will be generated based on the audience members' mental states and then played over the car's audio system. A laptop will juggle the multiple Bluetooth connections — which hopefully won't be affected by the jostling of a moving car.

One particularly daunting scenario Sharon conjured involves an intricate, eight-minute trumpet solo performed on top of a three-story tower atop a six-story warehouse downtown. "I need safety gear and a whole belay system just to get up to my spot," the trumpeter, Jonah Levy, told me. Beyond that, there's the feat of playing a difficult solo many times per day over an extended period. "You're holding a 4-pound piece of metal, and it's touching your face in the most sensitive tissue area on the whole body." Levy added, "I'm about to go risk my life to get into position with my trumpet and be stationed up here in the beating sun of L.A. for five hours. It's crazy! There's absolutely nothing easy about any of this. That goes for everyone involved." Hopscotch has so many moving parts that he said he often feels overwhelmed. "Honestly I don't know how this whole thing is going to come off. I'm just a small cog, and the company's called The Industry, so it kind of makes sense. I'm just a worker in this giant machine."

ON A CLOUDY DAY in early May of this year, Sharon arrived at a barracks-like building just north of the intersection of the 5 and 10 freeways to review the production's intended routes with the L.A. Department of Transportation. Inside, standing at a conference table, he took out a large piece of paper with a hand-drawn, kidney-shaped line representing the opera's green route, along which he placed toy

cars and multicolored Hello Kitty erasers to represent the audience and limousines. (“I got these in Japantown,” he said.) Aram Sahakian, the imposing-looking man who oversees special traffic operations and emergency response for the city of Los Angeles, peered over a pair of reading glasses to watch as Sharon began moving pieces.

“So at 11 a.m. it starts, and these guys do this,” explained Sharon, holding a purple eraser. “And then at the ten-minute mark ... they switch.”

“They switch vehicles?” Sahakian asked.

“Yes, but the performers stay in the vehicles. Are you with me so far?” Sharon continued moving pieces. “And then we switch until this purple guy who started over here, he’s done a full round.” Each route has eight scenes, five or six vehicles, and three sites. Stops along the route, explained Sharon, will serve as either a location for a scene or a transfer point where audience members will change cars.

“I will need to know the transfer points,” Sahakian said — it would make a difference if it was a public right of way, a parking lot, or curbside.

Throughout Hopscotch’s development, Sharon worked with close to a dozen city agencies, including the Department of Cultural Affairs, Mayor Eric Garcetti’s office, and the Army Corps of Engineers. He attributes their support, at least partially, to the success of Invisible Cities, which he said was “always on the brink of being shut down.”

But not everyone has been cooperative. Since the project’s inception, Sharon had envisioned a scene wherein participants get out of their limo and walk into Dodger Stadium, which would be empty save for a lone cellist playing on the pitcher’s mound. Sharon lobbied the Dodgers organization vigorously, but ultimately they denied him access. “It was just very hard for them to wrap their brains around this project,” he conceded. Part of the problem was the stadium’s security requirements, which he said amounted to tens of thousands of dollars per day. There’s also the possibility that the Dodgers will make it into the World Series — which would introduce another set of traffic issues. “If there’s a Dodgers game, one whole route is screwed,” he lamented at a production meeting. He held off on completing the details for that route until the latest possible date in order to “give the Dodgers plenty of time to not get into the World Series. They can win next year!” he quipped.



OVER LUNCH IN Japantown nine weeks prior to Hopscotch's inaugural limo journey, Sharon appeared uncannily relaxed. "A lot of people think of directors as control freaks. I'm the exact opposite," he said. "I love when the chaos blows your plans away and makes you scramble to figure out how you salvage it. That to me feels very theatrical. You watch people in real time, and it doesn't feel like a staid ritual that's repeated endlessly."

Still, some details do keep him up at night. Recent news of an impending El Niño storm system doesn't bode well for an opera that requires people to get in and out of cars all day. "If it's really severe weather? Who knows," he mused, admitting he'd always just assumed that the odds of rain would be low because of the current drought. Nevertheless, he and his team are working on "some serious plan B's" should El Niño materialize.

The opera has encountered no small difficulty obtaining insurance — which is not too surprising, considering that the show has so many distinct features to insure. (Levy's trumpet-in-the-tower scene alone requires about \$5 million in coverage.) Funding has been another ongoing concern. While Sharon is confident that tickets for Hopscotch will sell out quickly, he was both surprised and disappointed that it hadn't secured corporate sponsorship as of early September.

It's always a financial challenge to put on performances outside of traditional opera halls. Acclaimed British opera director Netia Jones, who frequently works on site-specific productions, told me, "Inevitably you're limiting the amount of audience that can actually experience the event — which makes it very special for the audience that are in that lucky select few, but it does become a little perverse in terms of what's going into it and who's going to witness it in the end." In total, only about 3,000 people will get to experience Hopscotch as ticketed audience members. This doesn't bother Sharon, who suggested that part of the essence of theater is its ephemerality. "It's there, and then it's gone. Then it becomes almost like a legend of, Who saw it? What did you think? And what went wrong the day you were on the route?"

Participatory performances like *Invisible Cities* and *Hopscotch* are part of a recent boom in the popularity of immersive, experiential art. From interactive theater like *Punchdrunk's* long-running *Sleep No More* in New York to the spiral slides at Carsten Höller's recent *Decision* at London's Hayward Gallery, audiences are frequently becoming participants. Jones said that while site-specific operas may be in vogue, they've been happening "since the beginning of the art form." The notion of having a large audience sit politely while performers deliver lines from far away is, in fact, a relatively recent development. For centuries, plays have been mounted on carts rolling through towns, or in outdoor spaces and gardens. Alexander Scriabin, before his death in 1915, even planned a massive multimedia performance of his *Mysterium* at the base of the Himalayas. "But every age," said Jones, "slightly reinvents it. We use the tools and technologies that are available to us at that time." Many of the recent works are fueled partially by new technology — *Invisible Cities*, for example, relied on Sennheiser, which provided the wireless audio. *Hopscotch* incorporates multiple technologies, including video feeds, smartphones, the brain-sensing headbands, and, of course, cars. Sharon said that he thinks of the cars — and the city itself — as protagonists, and in many ways the show is about technology, about how it shapes our experience of our urban environment.

To overcome the problem of the audience being so limited in number, Sharon worked with faculty and students at the Southern California Institute of Architecture to build a central hub in which thousands of people will be able to witness a transmission of the opera for free. (L.A. is often maligned as a city without a center, and Sharon acknowledges the irony of his attempt to create one.) A video feed of each scene will be livestreamed via 24 screens. Smartphones mounted inside each limo will capture interior car scenes, and at each location an audience member will be handed one of the phones and asked to shoot streaming video — thus experiencing the scene as so many people now see performances: via

smartphone. At the conclusion of each day's third and final performance, all the cars, the audience, the musicians, and other players will converge at the central hub for a synchronized grand finale — barring any major incidents, that is. Any Hopscotch scene that takes place in a public space will also transform its random passers-by into an unwitting audience, and Sharon believes that engaging a wider community in this accidental way has the potential to expand the audience for all of opera.

Taken as a whole, Hopscotch pushes Sharon's concept of opera — as a complicated coordination of parts — to its limits. Of the art forms, he argued, opera is “the most hybrid, the most interstitial, it's the one that really does merge the arts in such an unusual and unstable and exciting way.” His latest production may seem, in the words of Levy, “extreme,” but he emphasized that all operas are a “bizarre collaboration from all of these people that came together: the composer, the poet, the scenographer, the choreographer, the singer.”

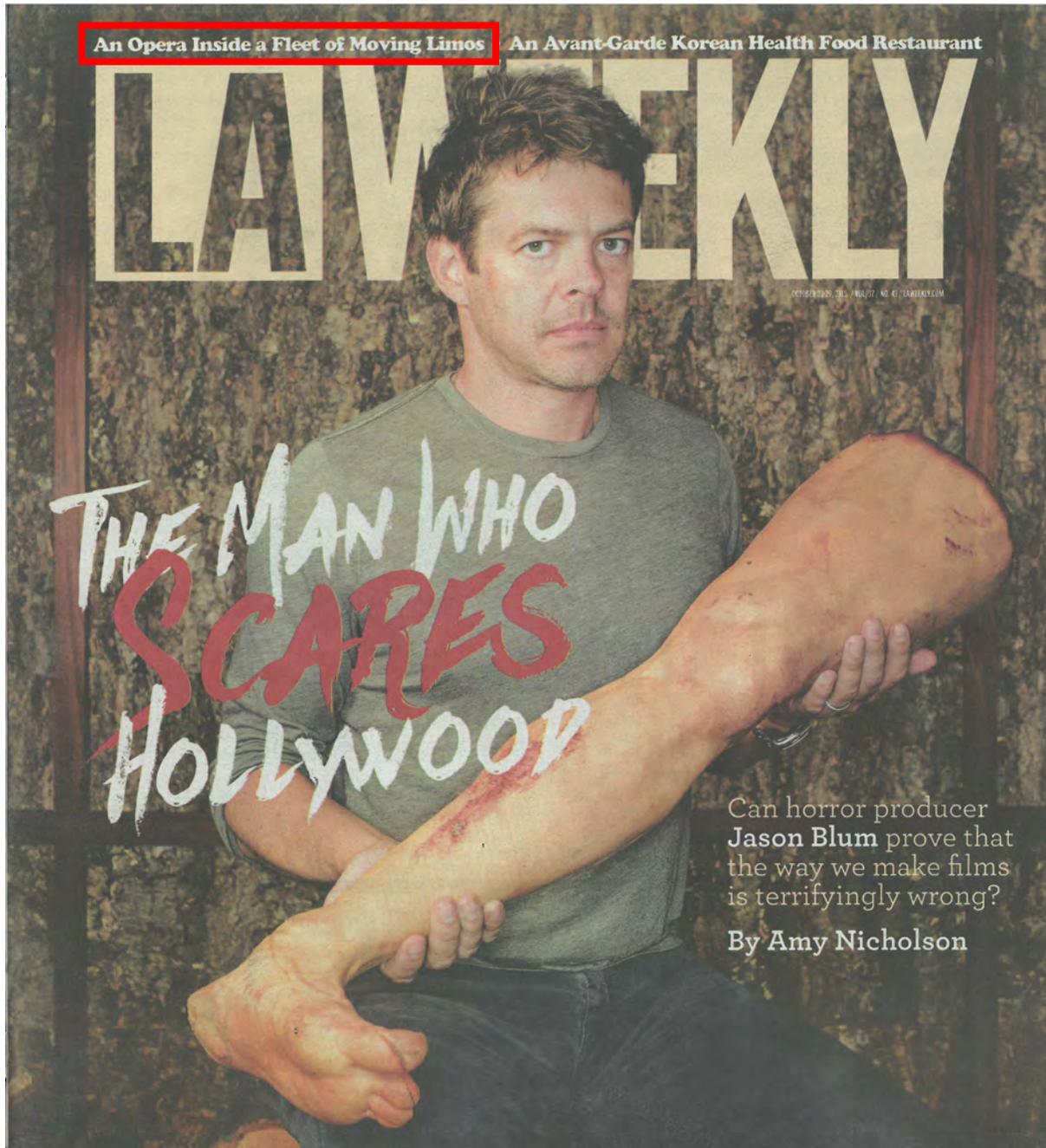
The risk in all this is that there is so much going on, and so much attention paid to the logistics, that the story and music — the “work,” as opera is defined — get lost. Some critics may label Hopscotch gimmicky, or find it a struggle to follow the fractured story line. But the basis of Sharon's concept for contemporary opera — one that engages a new, younger audience — is that the experience itself is narrative. “The search for a larger meaning is the whole fun,” said Sharon. “It's the whole point.”

Link: <https://story.californiasunday.com/hopscotch-roving-opera>

LA WEEKLY

October 23, 2015

Also ran online: <http://www.laweekly.com/arts/las-crazy-opera-inside-a-fleet-of-moving-limos-6184793>



PUBLISHER Mat Cooperstein
EDITOR Mara Shalhoup
EDITORIAL
MANAGING EDITOR Jill Stewart
DEPUTY EDITOR, ARTS & CULTURE Zachary Pincus-Roth
MUSIC EDITOR Andy Hermann
FOOD EDITOR Sarah Bennett
CRITIC AT LARGE Steven Leigh Morris
SENIOR WEB EDITOR Ali Trachta
COPY CHIEF Lisa Horowitz
STAFF WRITERS Hillel Aron, Gene Maddaus, Dennis Romero
LISTINGS EDITOR Falling James (music)
FILM CRITIC Amy Nicholson
RESTAURANT CRITIC Beshla Rodell

COLUMNISTS Gustavo Arellano, Henry Rollins, Jeff Weiss
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Danielle Bacher, James Bartlett, Paul T. Bradley, Gabrielle Canon, Stephanie Carrie, Ian Cohen, Hayley Fox, David Futch, Michael Goldstein, Adam Gropman, Ernest Hardy, Chaz Kangas, Dan Kohn, Brandon Lowrey, Angela Matano, Sean O'Connell, Tien Nguyen, Jessica P. Oplivie, Liz Ohanesian, Nicholas Pell, Heather Platt, Isaac Simpson, Art Tavana, Paul Teator, Catherine Wagley, L.J. Williamson, Chuck Wilson

CALENDAR WRITERS Siran Babayan, David Cotner, Mindy Farabee, Gary Fukushima, Ann Haskins, Mayank Keshaviah, Deborah Klugman, Daniel Kohn, Rena Kosnett, Tanja M. Laden, Lina Lecaro, Jenny Lower, Lily Moayeri, Michael Nordine, Shana Nys Dambrot, John Payne, Sarah Purkzabek, Bill Raden, Paul Rogers, Jonny Whiteside, Chuck Wilson, Chris Ziegler
PHOTOGRAPHERS Drew Barillas, Anne M. Fishbein, Star Foreman, Nanette Gonzales, Danny Liao, Amanda Lopez, Timothy Norris, Ryan Oranges, Ted Soqui
VIDEOGRAPHY Shannon Cottrell, Hso Hkam

CREATIVE SERVICES
CREATIVE DIRECTOR Darrick Rainey
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR Brian Guilian

MARKETING
WEST COAST MARKETING DIRECTOR Jessica Hill
MARKETING DIRECTOR Erin Domash
MARKETING COORDINATOR Tara Sim
STREET TEAM COORDINATOR Joel Lara
ADVERTISING SALES

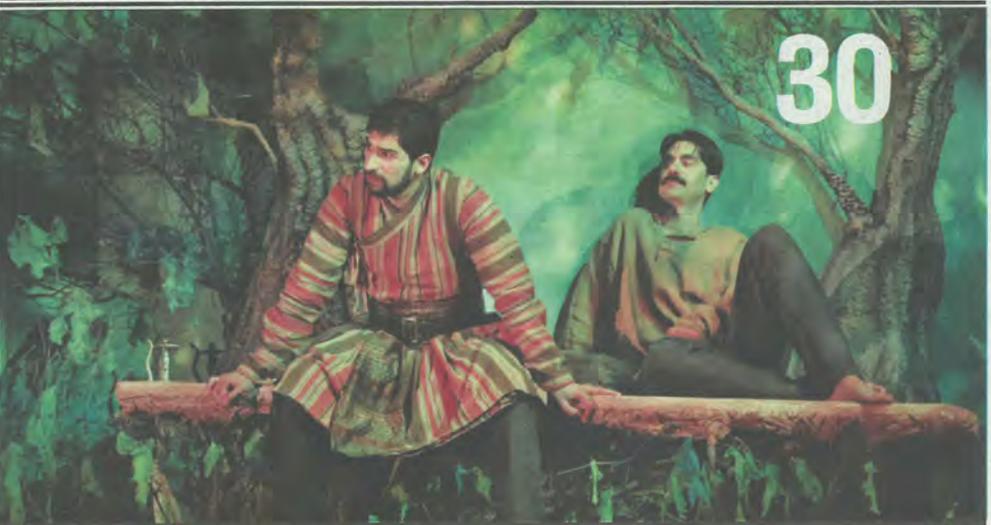
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR Dennis Cashman
FILM & THEATER ACCOUNT DIRECTOR Chris Blake
LIVE MUSIC & CLUB CATEGORY DIRECTOR Andrew Gyger
SALES DIRECTOR Christopher Hubbert
SENIOR REGIONAL MULTIMEDIA ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Jeannie Johnson
MULTIMEDIA ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES Elica Anthony, Kelly Bruno, Craig Fraick, Keith Lamont, Athena MacFarland, Ozzie Rosales, Paul Sanchez
NATIONAL ACCOUNT DIRECTOR Diana Hollis
DIGITAL ACCOUNT MANAGER Carlos Fitzpatrick
SALES COORDINATORS Dennis Estrada, Samantha Helou

PRODUCTION
PRODUCTION MANAGER Jorge Picado
ADVERTISING GRAPHIC DESIGNERS Jaguar Busuengo, Nicole Lomberger, Dan Selzer
CIRCULATION
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Pat Connell
FIELD COORDINATOR Hugo Castillo

FINANCE
REGIONAL BUSINESS MANAGER Brian Scharer
ACCOUNTING MANAGER Francisco Arambula
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE COORDINATORS Christina Aldana, Clint Mayher
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
IT SYSTEMS MANAGER Hunter McCallum

ADMINISTRATION/OPERATIONS
HUMAN RESOURCES/OPERATIONS MANAGER Kelly Inthout
OPERATIONS ASSOCIATE Chris Romero
RECEPTIONIST Monica Mendoza



CONTENTS //

NEWS...7
 MTA is building a cool new transit system, but people are using it less and less. **BY GENE MADDAUS.**

FAT & DRINK...17
 Baroo is the avant-garde Korean fermentation health food restaurant you're bound to love. **BY BESHLA RODELL.**

GO LA...22
 A feminist haunted house, an Adult Swim drive-in, an indie video game fest, a discussion of how *Playboy* influenced jazz and other worthy (and scary) experiences in L.A. this week.

CULTURE...27
 In **CULTURE**, **ZACHARY PINCUS-ROTH** takes a ride with *The Industry* as it preps an opera performed while the audience rides in limos. In **ART PICKS**, oversized vertical blinds create an air of mystery at a Glassell Park house. In **STAGE**, **MAYANK KESHAVIAH** reviews *Guards at the Taj* at the Geffen.

FILM...32
AMY NICHOLSON appreciates Kristen Wiig's performance in



Nasty Baby, and **STEPHANIE ZACHAREK** is upbeat about Sarah Silverman in depression tale *I Smile Back*, plus *A Ballerina's Tale*, about SoCal native Misty Copeland, Bill Murray in *Rock the Kasbah* and other films **OPENING THIS WEEK**, and rare screenings of iconic films in **YOUR WEEKLY MOVIE TO-DO LIST.**

MUSIC...40
ANDY HERMANN meets the promoters behind some of the biggest shows at the Hollywood Bowl, and soul singer Anderson Paak tells **JEFF WEISS** how Dr. Dre changed his career.

Plus: **HENRY ROLLINS**: THE COLUMNIST, **LINA IN L.A.**, listings for **ROCK & POP, JAZZ & CLASSICAL AND MORE...**

ADVERTISING
CLASSIFIED...58
EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT...58
REAL ESTATE/RENTALS...58
BULLETIN BOARD...59

ON THE COVER:
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANNY LIAO



THE MAN WHO SCARES HOLLYWOOD ... 9
 Can budget-slasher Jason Blum prove the way the studios make movies is horrifyingly wrong? **BY AMY NICHOLSON.**

LA WEEKLY (ISSN 0192-1940 & USPS 461-370) IS PUBLISHED WEEKLY FOR THE SUBSCRIPTION PRICE OF \$55.00 PER SIX MONTHS & \$90.00 PER YEAR BY L.A. WEEKLY, LP, 3861 SEPULVEDA BLVD., CULVER CITY, CA 90230. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT LOS ANGELES, CA. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO L.A. WEEKLY, P.O. BOX 4315, LOS ANGELES, CA 90078-4315.



The Industry founder Yuval Sharon centers, with executive director Elizabeth Cline, left. Hopscotch production manager Ash Nichols and musician Ixel Rajchenberg.

PHOTO BY JASON H. THOMPSON

Culture //

DRIVE-IN THEATER

L.A.'s crazy opera inside a fleet of moving limos

BY ZACHARY PINCUS-ROTH

“**E**verything goes. Everything happens... Things mess up, but the motion keeps happening. The project has a momentum. Nothing stops.”

Production manager Ash Nichols embraces the chaos of *Hopscotch*, L.A.'s new “mobile opera.” During the two years of planning, it had two previous production managers. They didn't survive.

“You just have to accept it's a different thing,” Nichols adds. “It tells you what it wants.”

On an October morning in the hot SCI-Arc parking lot, Nichols is overseeing tech rehearsal for Chapter 12 — one of 36 in the show. The cast gets into costume as crew members prep the stage, which in this case is a limo. Nearby are a few shipping containers, for storage. A half-mile away is the Little Tokyo office where the company, The Industry, has been plotting the controlled anarchy that will take place between Oct. 31 and Nov. 15. The Industry produced 2013's *Invisible Cities*, a dance opera in Union Station that now, by comparison, seems like a finger-puppet show.

Here's how *Hopscotch* works. Please take a deep breath.

You buy a ticket online. You get an email telling you to report to a certain intersection, in or near downtown. Four audience members show up at a time. For the first chapter you'll probably get in a limo.

Inside, as it drives, singers perform, a musician plays. Or you might have a non-limo experience — in a building, a park, a plaza. Or you might have on your head a sensor reading biofeedback, so that your mood determines the type of music you hear. (Rejected ideas included iPads and drones.)

You'll experience eight 10-minute chapters along a circular route. One ticket is good for just one route, but there are three — red, yellow and green. Ten additional chapters are short films online. Chapter 21 doesn't exist — on purpose.

If you were to experience the chapters in order — 1, 2, 3... — you'd watch, chronologically, the tumultuous life of Lucha, a puppeteer from Boyle Heights. But you won't. You'll actually experience, say, 14, 2, 17, 32, 4, 8, 24 and then 33. That could be enough for you, or you can see another route, or watch the animations online. Or you can go, for free, to the Central Hub, where screens will broadcast all 24 live chapters as they're happening. Or read the upcoming book.

“One of the key elements of this whole project is a sense of disorientation,” says Yuval Sharon, the director-conceiver. On that front, he has already had success.

Chapter 12, on the yellow route, is Lucha and Jameson's wedding day. Lucha gives Jameson a notebook as a gift. But he sings a mournful tune. “Time is not a river, but a web.”

This particular chapter has two versions. Take another deep breath.

Along each circular route, some audiences travel in one direction, some travel in another. So some go from chapters 6 to 12

to 7 and some go from 7 to 12 to 6. (Caution: spoilers ahead.) For chapter 12, one foursome watches Lucha and Jameson enact the scene before their wedding, in a limo driving from an Arts District warehouse to City Hall, and then watches the couple run up the stairs to get married. Then that foursome leaves the limo and another foursome, traveling the route in the opposite direction, gets in. They see the couple run down the steps of City Hall, having just been married. Then they see a slightly altered limo scene and Jameson's same aria.

The actors travel in the limo, back and forth, performing the same scene again and again.

The show was written like a TV series — writers gathered in a room over snacks and wine to break the story, based on the Orpheus and Eurydice myth. Eventually, six librettists and six composers split up the script.

“It was a wild mishmash at first,” says Sarah LaBrie, who co-wrote the libretto for Chapter 12 and came to observe today's rehearsal (and is a former *L.A. Weekly* intern). “You'd never have guessed this could be a real thing.”

Sharon and his team originally mapped out the routes using plastic figurines, like a neon green cat and a yellow school bus, on paper. Eventually they switched to Google Maps. They got permits to go into parks, and met with the Mayor's Office and L.A. Department of Transportation, but weren't shutting down streets and didn't feel the need for a filming permit.

Ashley Allen, one of 19 actresses who play Lucha, wears a white wedding dress

with patches of yellow floral lace, along with a yellow veil.

“I work with a lot of artists who don't have their shit together, but they're very creative. Or you have a lot of money, but they're very shallow,” Allen says. “It's incredible to find a company that has both of those.”

And, she adds, “Wrapping your head around this entire project is insane.”

Nichols chose a specific kind of limo for Chapter 12. The bench that faces backward doesn't connect to the side bench — allowing room for the guitarist. The audience sits on the side bench. The actors are in the back, facing forward. “Each limo is a unique snowflake,” Nichols says. “I spend a lot of time talking about limos.”

The guitarist, Nicholas Deyoe, plays while the limo drives. Plus, he says, “I've got all these high harmonics.” Meaning that rather than pushing the string all the way down to the fret, as you usually do, you lightly touch the string as you pluck. “Every little bump — it's really challenging.”

During prep for rehearsal, the crew tapes black plastic on the outside of the side window. Test audiences got too distracted by the scenery behind the actors. And the limo is wired, to broadcast the chapter to the Central Hub screen. There's a tiny Sennheiser microphone on the ceiling, and the camera is a Samsung Galaxy phone mounted on a side window.

Eventually, the cast, the guitarist and Sharon pile in. There's an assistant stage manager for every chapter — she sits in the front passenger seat. A stage manager oversees each route. Some chapters have up to four production assistants. For each chapter, the cast and crew have designated places to park and go to the bathroom.

(Everyone gets paid, including 123 performers and 90 crew members. The budget for this nonprofit effort is around \$1 million — a third each from foundations, individual donations and ticket sales.)

Nichols rides behind the limo with Rita Santos, the yellow route's stage manager. At one point Nichols is wired to a walkie-talkie while holding a personal LG Cosmos to send texts, a Samsung Galaxy S6 to see the Livestream feed of the rehearsal, and another Samsung Galaxy S6 that died.

Some drivers from the Wilshire Limousine Company show up off-book — with their turns memorized. Today's driver did not. As the actors perform, the limo is headed to the Spring Street side of City Hall. But it misses a turn. Downtown's one-way streets are unforgiving. The limo has to go around. And around. The actors' dialogue ends.

“We're way off the route. This would have ruined the whole show,” Sharon declares.

“You'll have to roll with the punches,” he tells his actors. “Observe the street life.”

Allen spots a quinceañera dress displayed outside a store. “My dress is way better than that,” she ad-libs.

Sharon laughs. Exactly.

“There's always another route,” he mused earlier that day. “It's what the practice of life is about.”

HOPSCOTCH | Various locations | Previews Oct. 24-25, performances Oct. 31-Nov. 15
hopscotchopera.com

December 2015

Also ran online: <http://www.prosoundnetwork.com/article/unique-opera-broadcast-from-24-limos/20294>

[30]

soundPOST | BROADCAST

Unique Opera Broadcast From 24 Limos

BY STEVE HARVEY

LOS ANGELES, CA—"Opera is inherently an adventure," according to Yuval Sharon, artistic director of experimental opera company The Industry. "Part of the adventure is offering audiences new ways of listening, looking and feeling."

The Industry's latest production, *Hopscotch*, described as "a mobile opera for 24 cars" and presented every weekend throughout much of November, is certainly an adventure. The story, told in 36 chapters, or scenes, is presented inside 24 limousines and at various stops along three different routes that wind through and around the downtown Los Angeles area.

The ambitious production's logistics are mind-boggling: 128 perform-



Hopscotch is a unique opera with individual performers broadcasting live from 24 mobile limousines to a Central Hub.

ers, backed by a 94-person production team, presented 90 minutes of work by six writers and six composers three times daily in 24 precisely scheduled and sequenced vehicles. Audience members—four per car—on each separate route experienced eight chapters, presented out of sequence, performed by singers, musicians and actors traveling along with them. Set pieces at locations along the way, indoors and outdoors, featured larger ensembles, including dancers. Ten additional chapters were made available as short animated features online.

"Each audience member is ex-

periencing the story in a completely unique way, in a random set of chapters," said Sharon. "What they experience is the city going by and this music as a way to augment our experience of Los Angeles."

One route set off with a motorcyclist buzzing around the limo as it drove through the city, the rider interacting with an actor in the car. At one stop, audience members transferred to a parked Airstream trailer, where two singers and two musicians delivered another chapter. Some in-car chapters lasted only a few minutes

(continued on page 32)

briefs

SiriusXM Adds SSLs

WASHINGTON, DC—Satellite broadcaster SiriusXM recently upgraded its studios in New York and Washington, DC, installing two SSL (solidstatelogs.com) C200 HD live production consoles to manage the turnaround of projects through the facilities, which produce special recording sessions and live music broadcast events for 200 channels.

WBUR On-Air With Genelec

NATICK, MA—WBUR in Boston, MA recently acquired a pair of full-spectrum three-way 8351A SAM Smart Active Monitors from Genelec (genelecusa.com) for installation in the station's Studio 3, where they have joined the Genelec 1031A monitors in WBUR's three other studios.

Calrec Goes to



Hopscotch

(continued from page 30)

before the audience was ushered to an outdoor performance, returning to the route in a different limo with different performers.

Meanwhile, at the Central Hub, a temporary structure built in the parking lot of the Southern California In-

stitute of Architecture in downtown L.A., 24 TV screens in a circular array showed live audio and video streaming from each of the in-car performances. To capture the audio in the cars, on rooftops and at other locations in order to broadcast it to the Central Hub, The Industry turned to Sennheiser, with whom the company had worked on its award-winning production of *Invisible Cities* (PSN, November 2013), "an invisible opera for wireless

headphones," at L.A.'s Union Station.

Key audio technology for this asphalt opera included Sennheiser's new AVX digital wireless microphone system as well as the company's well-established 2000 series equipment. Lavalier mics hidden inside 10 of the limos were connected to an AVX wireless belt pack transmitter. That signal hopped to a receiver in each car that was plugged into a smart-

phone, where it was combined with the camera image and sent to the Central Hub via carrier signal using the Livestream broadcast application. Each of the three routes was within a five-mile radius of the Hub.

The 24 separate broadcast streams were fed into an HDMI matrix at the Hub for distribution to the installed display screens. Audio from each stream was routed into Sennheiser's guidePORT system—which is more typically associated with museum applications—for broadcast to 24 individual wireless channels. Audience members milling around at the Hub (where admission was free) could select a channel on their wireless guidePORT receiver corresponding to a display and listen on Momentum 2 headphones to the performances in real time. At the end of the day, the limos delivered audience members and performers to the Central Hub for a grand finale live performance.

One limousine on each of the three routes was installed with Sennheiser 2000 series multi-channel rack units, comprising six channels of EM 2050 receivers and four channels of SR 2050 IEM wireless transmitters. Sennheiser A 1031 U passive, omnidirectional antennas were mounted to the roof of each limo. These systems enabled bi-directional communication between the vehicles and production staff as well as performers, such as the motorcyclist. On one route, Sennheiser 2000 series and G3 Series wireless equipment interconnected three downtown L.A. rooftops, where performers interacted over distances of up to a quarter of a mile.

According to Dave Missall, manager of customer development and application engineering at Sennheiser, "Yuval wanted to be able to have performers interacting with audience members inside and outside each car across various parts of the city. We opted to go with the Sennheiser 2000 wireless series because the transmitter has 100 mW of output, giving us the ability to boost output power to get the coverage we needed."

In July, 2014, Sennheiser launched its Momentum campaign, designed to raise awareness of the product range. "Hopscotch is part of our Momentum campaign," said Achim Gleissner, head of commercial management, broadcast and media at Sennheiser. "We inspire people, we inspire artists, to go the next step, to push the limits, push the boundaries. And we are there to help out and make it happen."

Sennheiser
www.sennheiser.com

THERE'S MORE ▶ Catch
a trailer for Hopscotch at
prosoundnetwork.com/dec2015

Made FOR THE Moment

BUILT FOR A LIFETIME

Audix's OM Series of dynamic vocal microphones has been setting new performance standards for more than 25 years. Each microphone features VLM™ (Very Low Mass) technology, and is designed, assembled and tested by Audix in the USA.

Professional music artist ZZ Ward relies on the OM5 to cut through the mix and deliver her soul-filled, powerful vocals. With six different models to choose from, professional artists and sound engineers worldwide trust Audix's OM series — no matter the venue, no matter the voice.



OM5

AUDIX

www.audixusa.com
503.682.6933

©2015 Audix Corporation All Rights Reserved.
Audix and the Audix Logo are trademarks of
Audix Corporation.

ZZ Ward
Love and War Tour

THE JEWISH JOURNAL

October 29, 2015

Yuval Sharon's 'Hopscotch' an opera on wheels

By Rick Schultz

Call it the first Uber opera.

Performed live in 24 limos, Yuval Sharon's "Hopscotch," which opens Oct. 31 and is scheduled to run through Nov. 15, is loosely inspired by Julio Cortazar's 1963 stream-of-consciousness novel of the same name. With four audience members in each vehicle, it unfolds along three winding geographical routes (red, yellow and green — the colors of a traffic light) through downtown and the East Side of Los Angeles.

So pay attention: That stranger sitting in the back seat or next to you may be one of the performers; or, as your limo turns a corner, you might miss some of the opera's action suddenly occurring on the street. And be prepared to get in and out of a number of limos as different parts of the story develop.

Sharon, artistic director of the experimental opera company the Industry, clearly wants to shake up the passive sit-and-watch of conventional opera-going. Sharon has also shown an interest in exploring the fraying boundaries between people, different environments and technology.

Two years ago, Sharon's site-specific "Invisible Cities," an operatic riff on Italo Calvino's 1972 Italian novel, asked audience members to listen to the music on wireless headsets while following the story walking through downtown's bustling Union Station.

"The audience is always first," Sharon said by phone from the central hub of "Hopscotch," a temporary structure built in the parking lot of the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc). That's where all 24 cars arrive for the "Hopscotch" grand finale after the 90-minute performance.

"With the hub, we built a center in the middle of the city," Sharon said. "The idea is these isolated car rides that all come together — our independent journeys coming together in one unified expression."

Sharon said the hub at SCI-Arc allows 180 people to watch all 24 live chapters at the same time. Admittance is free, but first come, first served.

"The story is a search for a spiritual center, and how that gets mapped geographically," Sharon said. "It's not a piece with a message. It's a piece with ideas and provocations. There will be a different meaning for everyone. I'm not trying to impart my own. It's about creating an openness to a wide range of responses without being vague or unspecific. 'Hopscotch' is not a riddle people need to solve."

Actually, “Hopscotch” leans on one of the most reliable of operatic genres — the love story. It’s an urban reimaging of the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, in which Orpheus follows his late wife, in this case, a Latina protagonist named Lucha, into the underworld in an attempt to bring her back to life. Indeed, a winding snake-like animation still from one of 10 animated chapters of the 36-chapter production route looks like the bowels of some strange car-eating creature. (The animated chapters can be viewed at hopscotchopera.com.)

The opera’s music employs a mix of styles, written by six composers based in Los Angeles — Veronika Krausas, Marc Lowenstein, Andrew McIntosh, Andrew Norman, Ellen Reid and David Rosenboom.

“It’s about storytelling, music-making and the performances,” Sharon said. “By taking away your destination, the ‘Where am I going?’ — the mechanics of the production — all go away.” Sharon called working out the opera’s tangled logistics “mind-boggling.” He worked closely with his production designer, Jason H. Thompson, not to mention a special traffic-operations representative at the L.A. Department of Transportation.

“But the art was always first,” Sharon said. “We were aware the logistics might eclipse an initial experience, but hopefully audacious enough, challenging enough, to draw people in.” Sharon, 36, was born in Chicago to Israeli parents from Ashkelon and Petah Tikva. Growing up, Sharon often visited Israel, where he still has family. And during that time, his father, an amateur pianist, took him to operas.

“I didn’t like opera at first,” Sharon said, “but it was a fun thing to do with my dad.” Sharon’s passion for opera began when he started singing in his high school choir and performing in theatrical pieces. After graduating from UC Berkeley, Sharon lived in Berlin from 2001 to 2002. It was a year Sharon calls “most formative” for him.

“I saw how theatrical an art opera could be by watching all these German directors,” Sharon said. “That’s when my ideas about theater and opera really began forming.”

Sharon first visited Los Angeles in 2010, employed as German stage director Achim Freyer’s assistant on LA Opera’s controversial “Ring” cycle production. Perhaps in homage to Freyer, Sharon’s heroine, Lucha, designs puppets — a striking component of Freyer’s “Ring” design. Sharon’s passionate interest in turning Cortazar’s “Hopscotch” into an opera wasn’t enough to secure the rights. So, like a character in Cortazar’s nonlinear story, Sharon adapted, using the novel as a jumping-off point.

“We struggled with the narrative part of the book,” Sharon said. “It’s set in 1960s Paris, but when we didn’t get the rights, that liberated us to tell a brand-new story. We wanted a structure that would allow as many pathways into the story as possible.”

Hence, the idea hatched of 24 limos with four audience members in each, riding along three geographical routes. Sharon, however, said his “Hopscotch” pays homage to Cortazar’s novel. The book appears as a prop, and one of the opera’s characters moves to Paris to start a new life, as the author did.

“The inspiration was looking for a center in a city like Los Angeles, which lacks a center,” Sharon said. “I like works that push boundaries and make the challenge a pleasure, extending our experience of the world by honoring our capacity for understanding.”

For tickets and more information about “Hopscotch,” [click here](#).

Link: http://www.jewishjournal.com/culture/article/yuval_sharons_hopscotch_an_opera_on_wheels



November 7, 2015

PERFORMING ARTS

'Hopscotch' Opera Jumpstarts Traveling Concert Scene

Updated November 7, 2015 - 5:46 PM ET

Published November 7, 2015 - 8:12 AM ET

MICHELLE LANZ



Listen to the Story

Weekend Edition Saturday

5:40

+ Playlist

↓ Download

<> Embed

≡ Transcript

SHARE



Comment

For more on this story, including photos of the performances, [check out this story by our colleagues at KPCC.](#)

89.3 KPCC

October 29, 2015

Hopscotch: Riding through LA in The Industry's mobile opera for 24 cars

By Michelle Lanz



Yuval Sharon is director of the mobile opera "Hopscotch." Sharon first came up with the concept and the story was created collaboratively with six composers and six writers. MAYA SUGARMAN/KPCC

When you think of opera what pops into your head? An ornate concert hall with a well-dressed, largely older crowd, perhaps?

Well, in a new production, The LA-based experimental opera company The Industry is taking opera out of the stuffy concert hall and onto the gritty streets of Los Angeles.

Called [Hopscotch](#), this new opera will take place inside 24 cars. Ticketholders will be whisked from scene to scene in different cars — mostly limos — to different locations throughout Los Angeles, while various singers, musicians and actors perform both inside and outside the cars.

If you're having a hard time wrapping your head around this concept, don't worry. The Frame's Michelle Lanz will clear it all up with this report.

A day or so before I attend a preview of the Hopscotch Opera, I get an email with GPS coordinates of where I'm supposed to be at exactly 2:30PM. The coordinates are important, because where I'm going doesn't even have an address.

I follow my trusty Google Maps, and I end up on top of a hill in Elysian Park overlooking Dodger Stadium and downtown L.A. There's a Hopscotch flag and an airstream trailer marking my destination. But this is hardly the place you'd expect to find one of the most ambitious operas ever produced in Los Angeles.

Yuval Sharon, Artistic Director of The Industry opera company, and the mastermind behind Hopscotch, describes:

Every single car ride is kind of a different opera. It's 24 10-minute operas basically.

That was part of the initial concept, that every time you switched cars you felt like you were going into a different universe. A different sound world, different artists, obviously because they can't be in more than one car at a time. Some of them have pre-recorded music with a live singer in it, some of them have 13 musicians involved. You will never know what to expect when you get into the next car.

Here's how it works: One ticket gets you on one of three performance routes, labeled Red, Yellow or Green. Within each route are 8 chapters — or scenes — of the Hopscotch story, told out of chronological order. You start off in a limo with an opera singer or a musician. Then you're driven through the city to the next location.

If you're curious, you can read a full summary of the plot and characters via the [Hopscotch website](#). You'll also find a series of animations summarizing the chapters.

Production Manager Ash Nichols is in charge of overseeing all elements of the show. She says:

It's an opera, but it's also very much like a new play; it's also very much like a film shoot with 24 locations. It's got a foot in every world, we've got dancers, we've got an aerialist, we've got actors and opera singers.

And this isn't just a leisurely car ride. You'll exit the car and walk to a scene along the LA River or near train tracks in Chinatown. Next, you'll get into a limo that will race you through Boyle Heights to a scene in a parking lot. Inside the car with you are 3 or 4 other audience members, like Philip King, a harpist.

"I'm the harpist in the limo that the audience is riding with while they are watching the scene in front of them, and that scene is being mic'd into the limo. They will have a once in a lifetime experience with me. You don't get beatboxing harpists. Too much."

It might seem crazy, but the chronology of the story doesn't matter with Hopscotch. The point is that each participant is thrown into a scene and a location unexpectedly.

Yuval Sharon explains:

We want the audience to be surprised. In many ways the core idea of this project is a sense of disorientation, quite literally. So if you get into a car and not knowing the destination, how does that change the way that you view the city?

Hopscotch isn't the first Industry production that challenged the way we view both opera and the city of L.A. In 2013, the company staged Christopher Cerrone's opera, *Invisible Cities*, inside LA's Union Station.

For that performance, ticket-holders wandered freely throughout the fully operational train station while actors performed their scenes in different areas throughout the station. The music and vocal tracks were mixed live and fed into wireless Sennheiser headphones (Sennheiser is also providing microphones and other technology to make Hopscotch work).

It was actually in the months leading up to the premiere of *Invisible Cities* when Sharon and his collaborator Jason Thompson had the initial idea for Hopscotch.

Invisible Cities at that point was so hard and seemed like a pipe dream . . . and we started thinking, what's going to be harder? We thought, 'What about an opera in cars, in which the audience has an incredibly intimate experience with a singer and they keep switching cars over and over again?' I thought, 'Whoa. That would be so hard.' Unfortunately, the idea seemed so exciting that I couldn't let go of it.

Two years after that initial spark, Hopscotch is now a fully formed — and quite complex — production. A total of six composers and six writers collaborated on the story.

The final result spans 36 chapters, or scenes, and follows several years in the lives of the three main characters: Lucha, Jameson and Orlando.

Ninety-four crew members and 128 performers will bring the story to life each day of the opera's three-week run. By the time it's all over, the cast members will have performed their parts 192 times.

A so-called Central Hub in the parking lot of the Southern California Institute of Architecture acts as opera headquarters as well as the finale of the show. It's also free and open to the public to attend, and large TV screens will be showing video streaming in from the various cars and locations. Sennheiser headphones will be available for people to listen in on the action.

Taking the opera out of the opera house and into the streets — and in cars — comes with its own challenges for the six composers. Some had to tweak and rethink their works once rehearsals moved into the streets.

Composer Marc Lowenstein describes, the challenge was "mostly acoustics."

You'd think a car is a dead acoustic space, but a limousine has just enough space that the singers can really sing and sing lightly and it's wonderful . . . You really have to be willing to write what you love and then be prepared to let go and constantly reshape. For me personally it took a lot of work to figure out what would work compositionally.

And then there's the fact that the scenes take place on busy streets and in public places —something production manager Ash Nichols has to coordinate:

We're not going through quiet residential neighborhoods that don't have much traffic. We're in very iconic L.A. places that are busy and full of people and that's what makes it exciting. And that's what makes it amazing — that we have these stories that are designed around these places. But it's also a big risk.

After previewing the show myself I can tell you that it definitely isn't a hot mess. But does Hopscotch succeed in making audiences experience both opera and Los Angeles in a different way?

Audience member Tammy Silver seems to think so:

It was so peaceful and interesting and it made me look at the city, passing by in our little capsule of a car hearing opera music and maybe a flute or a violin and realizing no one else know what's going on in this car. And that's kind of how life is here in L.A.

For ticket info check out the [Hopscotch website](#). You can experience the opera for free at the central hub located at the [Southern California Institute of Architecture](#) in downtown L.A.

Link: <http://www.scpr.org/programs/the-frame/2015/10/29/45012/hopscotch-riding-through-la-in-the-industrys-mobil/>



October 27, 2015



Police in Schools, A Mobile Opera, and Whither High-Speed Rail?

In the U.S., 43 percent of schools have security staff on hand, more than half of those positions are held by police officers. And the California High-Speed Rail Authority still promises a bullet train between L.A. and San Francisco but funds for the \$68 billion project are proving hard to come by.

LISTEN TO THIS EPISODE
OCT 27, 2015



PLAY



FROM THIS EPISODE

The video of a police officer body-slaming a student in South Carolina went viral yesterday. Having police officers in classrooms is not rare. In the U.S., 43 percent of schools have some sort of security staff on hand, and more than half of those positions are held by sworn police officers.

And around the country, students of color are suspended three times as often as white students, according to the Department of Education. We hear a lot about how these disparities affect boys. But girls get less attention, even though black girls are suspended six times more often than their white counterparts.

Next, brain surgeon Ben Carson is the new GOP front-runner, according to a new national poll out today. Among his supporters is a resurgent voting bloc: Evangelicals.

Then, an experimental opera called *Hopscotch* is being staged throughout the streets of downtown L.A.—including inside a fleet of moving limos.

Finally, the California High-Speed Rail Authority still promises a bullet train that will take a little more than two and a half hours to run between L.A. and San Francisco. But funds for the \$68 billion project are proving hard to come by. Public support is down and the project is at least two years behind schedule.

Banner Image: Murchison Middle School's Junior Police Academy cadets; Credit: [Phillip LeConte](#)

Producers:
[Matt Holzman](#)
[Anna Scott](#)
[Jolie Myers](#)
[Christian Bordial](#)
[Ryan Kailath](#)

Hopscotch, the Opera 11 MIN, 10 SEC



An outside-the-box opera called *Hopscotch* is being staged throughout the streets of downtown L.A.—including inside a fleet of moving limos. *Hopscotch* is the latest project from L.A.'s experimental opera company, the Industry. Over the past five years, the Industry has built a reputation for creating shows in unlikely places. And the L.A. Philharmonic recently announced it's giving the company a three-year residency, starting next year.

Guests:
[Yuval Sharon](#), The Industry



November 3, 2015



This is Anthony Byrnes Opening the Curtain on LA Theater for KCRW.

When talking about Yuval Sharon and the Industry's new mobile opera Hopscotch, it's helpful to separate the idea of it from the "it" of it.

The idea of it is inspired, massive, complicated and is heir to both the best and sadly the worst of Los Angeles.

The "it" of it is simultaneously uneven and transcendent.

Let's start with the basics. Hopscotch is a theatrical event that unfolds across 24 individual chapters scattered around downtown Los Angeles. The \$100 ticket buys you a ride around downtown LA in a series of stretch limos. You and three other audience members experience the show with performers joining you and singing as you travel by car or take in scenes that unfold in site-specific locations.

Now, all the different chapters happening in all those different locations are being wirelessly streamed back to a central hub built in front of SCI-Arc where you can also listen to the whole thing for free through headphones while watching video screens. From a purely technical and logistical perspective, the piece is genius.

Now to the "it" of it. If all the above detail isn't dizzying enough, the chapters are told, or experienced, in a non-linear fashion: so chapter 7 is followed by 22 and then 28, et cetera. The experience is narrative in a Joycean way with you putting the piece together in your own mind - constructing your own whole out of fragments. I got to experience eight of the chapters. Of those, roughly a third felt compulsory, a third were interesting but not stunning, and two were transcendent.

Let's focus on the transcendent.

The first that blew me away was duet between Michelle Shocked and Paul Berkolds. There we were riding through Japan town, looking through rose colored limo windows, smelling a bouquet of flowers, while Michelle Shocked sang longingly about love and the city. Magical.



Then, we're dropped off in front of the Bradbury building where a dance piece encompasses the entire interior of that glorious space. We ride up the antique, open-caged, elevator accompanied by our heroine and a saxophone player. Once at the top, the space is filled with dancers, a jazz drummer, an upright bass, as we wind our way through the architecture: site specific performance at its best.

Those two scenes were worth the entire afternoon.

The challenge in the piece, and frankly in Mr. Sharon's previous *Invisible Cities* at Union Station, is the art's relationship to audience and to the city. While moments in the Bradbury and *Michelle Shocked* pining for a city of memory connect you deeply with our home, you frankly spend a lot of time in a car ignoring the world outside. I can't help but feel like that's a missed opportunity. When the city itself finally comes into focus, ironically, it's on video screens during the finale. I long for the Industry's work to embrace both the tidy choreography of art and the messy reality of our city.

In the end, we need to celebrate Yuval Sharon's ambition and vision. There is no other performing arts leader in the city who's thinking this big and we could all take a page from his score.

Hopscotch plays through November 22 in downtown LA.

This is Anthony Byrnes *Opening the Curtain* on LA Theater for KCRW.

Duration: 90 minutes without an intermission.

Photo: A chapter of Hopscotch is performed in the Bradbury Building (Dana Ross)

Link: <http://www.kcrw.com/news-culture/shows/opening-the-curtain/hopscotch-ing-tidy-art-through-our-messy-city>



October 31, 2015

KUSC.org
CLASSICAL | fm 91.5

NOW PLAYING: Classical Music with Alar
Georg Philip Telemann: Quartet #3 "Hambu
[See the Detailed Playlist](#)

PLAYLIST PROGRAMS ▾ HOSTS ▾ EVENTS PODCASTS ▾

Programs

[Home](#) | [Schedule](#) | [All Programs](#)

Arts Alive with Brian Lauritzen

Saturdays at 8 a.m.



Arts Alive is KUSC's arts magazine of the air. Each week on Arts Alive, we bring you news from the arts, our Around Town event calendar, Kenneth Turan's film reports, features on artists, exhibitions and performances and "Ask the Dean," where listeners pick the brain of USC Thornton School of Music Dean Rob Cutietta. Tune in each week, or listen to the podcast for a trip through the dynamic arts landscape of Southern California.

[Follow @BrianKUSC](#)

Arts Alive Podcasts



Arts Alive with Brian Lauritzen

205 episodes

Classical KUSC's weekly on-air arts magazine

Get the podcast:

[Subscribe via iTunes](#)

[Subscribe via RSS](#)



Download

October 31, 2015: The Industry's Hopscotch, Rufus Wainwright

Posted 10/31/2015 8:00:00 AM

Re-making opera for the modern age. LA company The Industry is breaking apart the age-old art form, and pushing the pieces onto the open road for Hopscotch, an opera performed in 24 moving cars. Plus, when inspiration and opportunity combined, singer Rufus Wainwright found himself writing an opera. Kenneth Turan stops by to review two major star-vehicles and an intense documentary. And from sopranos in Sweden to Italian tenors ... we Ask the Dean how geography influences the voice.





November 12, 2015

Experimental Operas Might Make the Genre Cool Again

By Lola Blanc



Photo courtesy of Hopscotch

The limousine rolled through Boyle Heights, a neighborhood near downtown Los Angeles, where I was waiting to get in. There was a harpist with dreadlocks already seated inside, dreamily strumming, as the limo circled around a car accident. It wasn't a real car accident, of course—the whole thing had been constructed from wood, and we watched through the limo window like it was a movie screen. A distraught redhead in a yellow dress and a handsome motorcyclist were dealing with the aftermath of their collision. Their voices were being piped in through the speakers, so you could hear that they were both upset—but not so upset that we couldn't also feel a spark starting between them.

This was just one version of the beginning of *Hopscotch*, an opera unlike any I've seen. (Full disclosure: I haven't seen many.) It's a world away from the traditional stage performance you'd expect from an opera, and a fantastical world at that. The performance unfolds throughout 36 chapters, which are told from within several moving limousines. There's no particular order to the chapters, and the limos circle on one of three routes, which each tell one-third of the narrative. There are 128 performers, many miles, and a dizzying feat of logistical planning.



A wood-constructed accident scene in 'Hopscotch.' Photo by the author

Hopscotch is the latest iteration of experimental opera, a trend that's appeared everywhere from Stockholm to Dallas. Unlike the formal posture of operas past, these new experimental operas play with new storylines, use of music, and even reject a traditional stage and audience. None seem to challenge the convention on a scale as large as *Hopscotch*, which was dreamed up by director Yuval Sharon and created in collaboration with six composers and six writers. Sharon is the Artistic Director of The Industry, a Los Angeles-based opera company making "musical, operatic, visual, and immersive experiences."

Sharon is no stranger to bending convention: His last major project, *Invisible Cities*, took place entirely within LA's Union Station, the audience listening on headphones as singers and dancers performed among regular passengers and passersby.

As for *Hopscotch*, Sharon says "the whole project began with a conversation that [production designer Jason Thompson and I] had... It actually was, in a way, a challenge; we were sort of daring each other. What's harder than *Invisible Cities* that will make completing *Invisible Cities* seem easy? So we started thinking about driving."

Link: <http://www.vice.com/read/experimental-operas-might-make-the-genre-cool-again-511>

October 29, 2015

Hopscotch: opera hits the road in Los Angeles

By Jordan Riefe



Hopscotch: opera that's going places. Photograph: Supplied

With their 2013 production of [Invisible Cities](#), a site-specific performance set in Los Angeles' landmark [Union Station](#), [the Industry](#), the city's premier avant garde opera company, redefined what an opera could be. Directed by the company's artistic director, [Yuval Sharon](#), based on the Italo Calvino novel and composed by Christopher Cerrone, *Invisible Cities* saw 200 viewers, listening to live music through wireless headphones, follow performers across the concourse and down the platforms, an immersive, participatory experience that became a finalist for the 2014 Pulitzer prize.

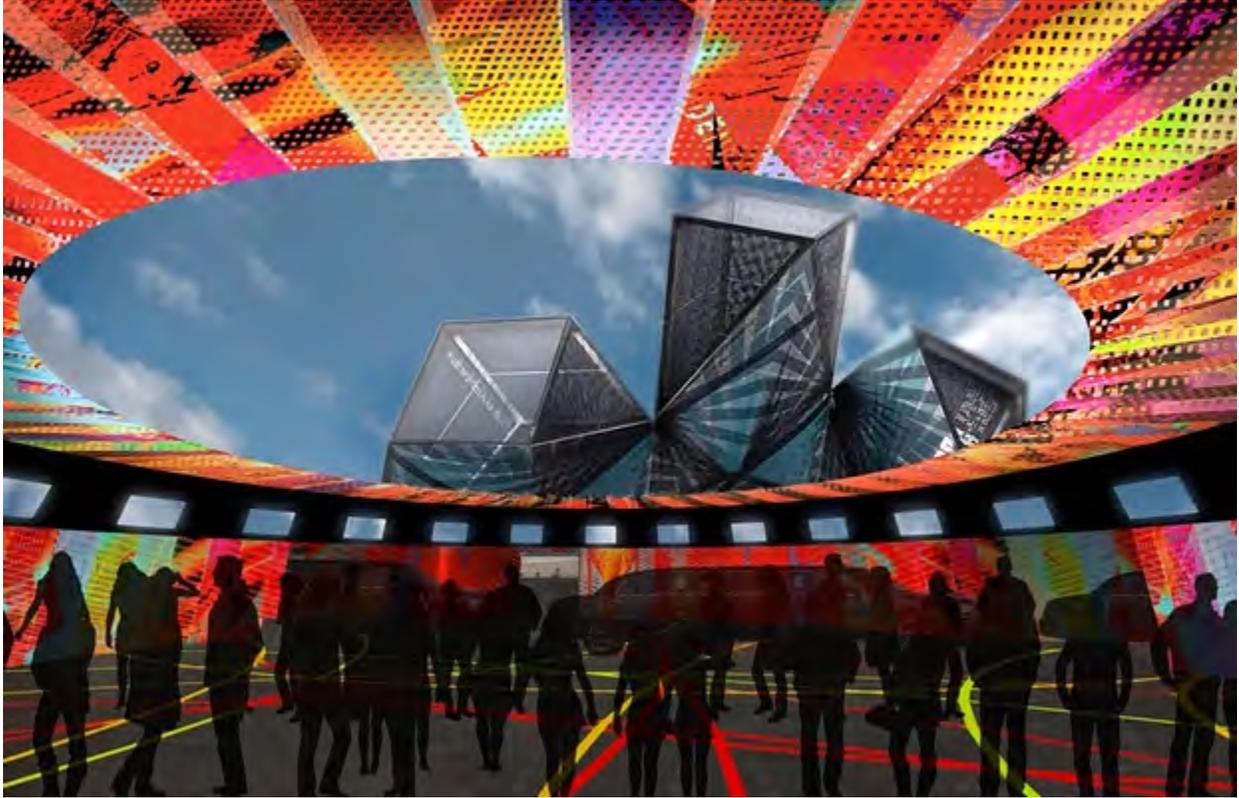
After that creative and technical landmark, Sharon felt he had to raise the bar. The result is [Hopscotch](#), which premieres in 24 cars in and around downtown Los Angeles on Saturday. "Hopscotch really grew out of the aesthetic inquiry we started pursuing in *Invisible Cities*," says Sharon, a boyish 36-year-old. "So much of creating art is about

trying to correct our view of reality, explore what things would be impossible. So this is really a continuation of that.”

“Impossible” is the right word for Hopscotch, a logistical nightmare of an opera that takes place along three different routes, covering 36 chapters of a story written by six writers and scored by six composers. Twenty-four of the chapters are live; 10 are animated, there’s a car wash interlude and a finale. Each route, carrying four audience members, experiences only eight of the chapters, which are not in chronological order. The cars also contain actors or musicians; sometimes the music will come out of the car stereo. Action occurring simultaneously during the 90-minute performance is broadcast live at a hub in the arts district (where people can watch the show for free), where all routes converge for the final chapter.

While it may seem mind-boggling on paper, as a spectator it’s not hard to work out a vague narrative concerning Lucha, Orlando and Jameson. Apprentice to Orlando and Sarita, a husband-wife team of puppeteers, Lucha meets Jameson in a car accident. Eventually the two fall in love and settle down, but his work on a brainwave transmitter threatens to ruin their relationship. In time, Lucha is reunited with Orlando, whom she comforts after the passing of Sarita.

Real life and performance mingle by chance, to transcendent effect. When Orlando sings a melancholy mariachi farewell to Sarita, she is painted like a Día de los Muertos ghost, dancing among the gravestones at [Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights](#). At a preview, as the lyric “At least we have each other” rises up, we happen to pass a real-life family picnicking near a grave. Later, Lucha sings her quinceañera song lamenting the fact that she must leave childhood behind and become a woman. We’re stopped long enough at a traffic light to see some tired middle-aged women emerge from a carnicería, kids and groceries in tow.



Auto-aria: the interior of the Hopscotch hub. Photograph: Supplied

“There’s a great quote by Duchamp that says the audience completes the work, and that’s been an inspirational mantra for me and the work we do at the Industry,” says Sharon, loquacious and giddy a week before the first night. “There’s really no one way to experience this work. It’s up to the audience to piece it together the way he or she sees fit. As much as a departure Hopscotch is, it’s very much a continuation of the artistic experience we began at the Industry five years ago.”

Sharon first encountered opera at a young age, when he was taken to see it by his father. As he grew older, he noticed a stark difference between what he was imagining when he heard a piece and what he saw on stage. This disparity ignited the spark that made him want to become an opera director. After graduating summa cum laude from UC Berkeley in 2001, he spent four years as director of New York City Opera’s VOX workshop for new American opera, and later assisted director [Achim Freyer](#) on the [LA Opera’s Ring Cycle](#).

His work with the Industry includes [Crescent City](#), a multimedia performance described as a “hyper-opera” about a resurrected voodoo queen set in an apocalyptic New Orleans; [Invisible Cities](#); and [In C](#). This all-day event took place in the courtyard at the [Hammer Museum](#) with dancers and musicians performing avant garde composer [Terry Riley](#)’s musical tabula rasa without end. Working independently, Sharon’s acclaimed production of [John Adams](#)’s [Doctor Atomic](#) at [Berlin’s Staatstheater Karlsruhe](#) earned him the 2014 Gotz Friedrich prize.

Now [Sharon](#) has been named artist in residence of the [LA Philharmonic](#). “If I could have come up with a title it would be disrupter in residence,” says [Deborah Borda](#), the LA Phil’s CEO. “We asked how do we affect major change in terms of evolution and creating an audience for the 21st century in format, technology, a new sense of community outreach? Yuval struck me as the right person for this time.”

“He is a genuinely creative and out-of-the-box thinker applying his vision of the theatricality of life to make a real difference. Invisible Cities literally changed my concept of how we might create music. It was a real seminal moment for me.”

Sharon will bring to the LA Philharmonic his formula for success, the first rule of which is that there is no formula. “The real world can be kind of scary sometimes,” he says. “You have to approach it daringly and with a sense of adventure and saying yes to the challenge. And amazingly, when you do that, you’re more often than not rewarded for the effort.”

- Hopscotch takes place in downtown Los Angeles from Saturday to 15 November. [Details here](#)

Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/oct/29/hopscotch-opera-hits-the-road-los-angeles>

December 17, 2015

Tinseltown's comeback: Los Angeles' resurgence as America's cultural capital

With new prestige museums, high-profile art events and a proliferation of bands, record stores and hangout spaces, the city's cultural life is booming

By Rory Carroll



Traffic in [Los Angeles](#) has long symbolised the apparent soullessness of a city of motorists snarled on highways, forever seeking exit ramps. But for three weeks last month some of that traffic morphed into something rather sublime: the world's first mobile opera.

[Hopscotch](#), an experimental opera performed in cars, turned LA's streetscape into a stage for a modern retelling of the ancient legend of Orpheus and Eurydice.

The avant garde opera company Industry deployed 24 cars as well as a small army of composers, writers, singers, musicians, drivers and technicians to turn downtown and eastern LA into a storytelling fantasy realm. Critics raved.

“So much of creating art is about trying to correct our view of reality, explore what things would be impossible,” the company’s artistic director, Yuval Sharon, [said](#).



Hopscotch – an opera in cars. Photograph: PR

He could have been speaking for LA. The city thrummed with art in 2015, a conjunction of personalities, exhibitions, openings and events which for many marked its resurgence as a cultural capital.

A spanking new \$140m gallery, a revitalised “museum mile”, old artists returning, young ones moving here for the first time, behemoths like Netflix expanding: it added up to a banner year for a metropolis long derided as a vapid Tinseltown.

“It’s like a rope that keeps unfurling and it never ends,” said [Sasha Frere-Jones](#), a cultural critic and lifelong New Yorker who moved to LA in July. He was referring in particular to the city’s proliferating number of bands, record stores and hangout spaces, big and small, like Melody Lounge, Lace and The Barn.

“I’d no idea the east side would be so rich and varied. Because it’s so atomised you can run across anything, anywhere.” If LA had an inferiority complex

about its east coast rival, Frere-Jones had not noticed. “I don’t encounter it. People here are pretty invested in the city.”

For longtimers like the singer Alanis Morissette, who moved here from Canada 21 years ago, the boom feels like an intensifying trend rather than a new phenomenon. “It’s really dense and rich. Every day there’s something new happening. It’s a pretty exciting city. There’s a reason why I haven’t left,” she said.

The year’s flagship event was September’s inauguration of [the Broad](#), a \$140m museum of modern and contemporary art financed by the philanthropists Eli and Edye Broad.

Attractions include pieces by Robert Therrien, Damien Hirst, Cy Twombly, Cindy Sherman and Takashi Murakami as well as Yayoi Kusama’s Infinity Mirrored Room, an experiential artwork which encloses people, one at a time, in a mirror-lined chamber with thousands of pulsating lights.

The Broad’s honeycomb-like structure, known as “the veil”, is on track to welcome more than 200,000 visitors by the end of 2015. Online advance reservations are booked into March. “The public reception has been overwhelming and has exceeded our expectations,” Eli Broad said in a statement.

The 120,000-square-foot structure took its place alongside the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney concert hall on Grand Avenue, marking the boldest attempt in a decade to transform a notoriously desolate city centre into a lively arts hub.

Another landmark, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Lacma), is preparing for an ambitious \$600m makeover featuring a 410,000-square-foot new building designed by the Swiss architect Peter Zumthor.

Rita Gonzalez, the museum’s contemporary art curator, said the city’s creative energy had been slowly building. “Los Angeles art museums, art schools, galleries and artist-run spaces have been important for a long time but it’s really in the last 15 years that things have really taken off.”

Gonzalez cited the upcoming Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA exhibition, which will bring dozens of museums, alternative spaces and other cultural spaces together to focus on Latin American and Latino art, as evidence of a strong collaborative spirit between curators.

The British artist David Hockney, whose depictions of swimming pools and naked young men helped define LA's image as a sun-kissed idyll in the 60s, has enjoyed a creative burst since returning to a home in the Hollywood Hills in 2013.

In July, at the age of 78, he held [a solo exhibition](#) of “photographic drawings” by the Venice boardwalk. “LA has always inspired me,” he said. “The light here is marvellous – much better than England.”

Younger artists are also flocking to LA, especially downtown, which now brims with lofts and converted industrial spaces.

“I see LA as this canvas for me to expand on things that I had already been working on in Phoenix,” said [Sean Deckert](#), 31, a photographer who uses architecture, sculpture and video in installations. He moved here in May. “There’s a core group of people working super hard to make super cool things happen downtown. All the new galleries are here because they can get space and still be edgy and risky.”

So many people packed a recent Mattea Perrotta exhibition at the Mama gallery it took Deckert 30 minutes to drive out. “That type of energy you can’t find in a lot of places.”

Pockets of downtown, once a ghost town after dusk, now teem with weekend revellers who queue to get into bars and clubs. Ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft fuel the trend by removing the hassle of finding parking and the worry about drink driving.

Some party to excess. “I don’t work Saturday nights any more,” confided one Uber driver, who declined to be named. “The puking, you know?”

A graver concern is that gentrification will push out artists who colonise semi-deserted neighbourhoods, paving the way for posh apartments and stores which drive up rents. The average rent in downtown LA jumped 5.3% over the past year, to \$2,158.

“Look up ‘Arts District’ on Google Maps and the first image you’ll see is the rooftop pool at the El Molino lofts,” noted an [LA Times columnist](#). “Every week seems to bring a new restaurant or bar or a ‘curated’ boutique dispensing \$1,000 watches and \$40 totes.”

Deckert lives near the jewellery district, about two miles from the arts district. “A total rip-off. It’s already too expensive for people like me.”

New York’s arts scene bloomed in the 1970s partly because low rent enabled people to live on basically nothing, said Frere-Jones. LA has surged thanks to cheaper rents than today’s New York but he noticed the number of abandoned buildings – “like space in a garden for things to grow” – appeared to be dwindling.

Money – lots of it – is driving a different type of boom seen in the expanding and under-construction headquarters of the likes of Netflix (Hollywood), YouTube (Playa Vista) and Hulu (Santa Monica).

Tinseltown itself is making a comeback. California’s decision to grant more generous tax breaks for TV and film production has reversed years of “runaway production” to lower-tax rivals such as Georgia and New Mexico.

Los Angeles recorded 2,057 shooting days for scripted television shows over a recent three-month period, a 54% spike from the same period last year, according to Film LA Inc.

Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/dec/17/los-angeles-culture-music-museums-art>



November 08, 2015

What it's like to watch an opera unfold in LA traffic

By Olivia Niland



On Saturday afternoon, a bride and groom walked hand in hand up the steps of Los Angeles City Hall. She wore a yellow lacy dress and veil, he sported a white tuxedo and bowtie, and they disappeared inside the building together, giggling. A few onlookers stared inquisitively, and several teenagers on skateboards turned to a group of us gathered on the sidewalk and asked: "Hey, what movie is this for?"

Though the couple were indeed actors, they weren't in a movie. Their City Hall nuptials were part of a mobile opera called *Hopscotch* that is zig-zagging through Los Angeles' bustling streets in 24 cars for a month-long run.

Hopscotch aims to bring a genre long associated with older audiences to new generations, and to a new, unexpected setting — city traffic.

On Saturday afternoon, a bride and groom walked hand in hand up the steps of Los Angeles City Hall. She wore a yellow lacy dress and veil, he sported a white tuxedo and bowtie, and they disappeared inside the building together, giggling. A few onlookers stared inquisitively, and several teenagers on skateboards turned to a group of us gathered on the sidewalk and asked: "Hey, what movie is this for?"

Though the couple were indeed actors, they weren't in a movie. Their City Hall nuptials were part of a mobile opera called *Hopscotch* that is zig-zagging through Los Angeles' bustling streets in 24 cars for a month-long run.

Hopscotch aims to bring a genre long associated with older audiences to new generations, and to a new, unexpected setting — city traffic.



As the scenes played out, I saw Lucha and Jameson on their wedding day, Lucha heartbroken over Jameson's infidelity and much later in life, old friends Lucha and Orlando reunited and in love. In between, there were dancers rehearsing, a scientist experimenting and a silent man playing music on champagne glasses. Told only in snippets, the finer points of the plot are intentionally difficult to follow, but the overall story tells of love, loss and a longing for what once was.

Though most of *Hopscotch's* dozens of singers, actors and dancers don't interact with the audience, they're not kept at a distance — some asked questions of or even touched audience members. The confines of a limousine certainly made for the most intimate opera performance I'd ever experienced. Each scene is scored by one of six different Los Angeles-based composers, and outside, some singers zipped by on motorcycles as special tech in their helmets piped their voices inside. Trumpeters stationed along the streets provided musical accompaniment perfectly timed with each scene.

Hopscotch's three routes — Red, Yellow and Green — run three times a day each weekend, spotlighting eight different chapters in no particular order, with each new audience beginning with a different chapter.

Hopscotch makes stunning use of downtown Los Angeles, too, from its crumbling art deco theaters to the Bradbury Building, made famous by films including *Blade Runner* and *500 Days of Summer*. Even city walls are given star treatment: A projector rigged atop one limo creates otherworldly animation sequences inside downtown's gritty tunnels. That drew several gasps from my group.

Many have argued that LA has long played a supporting role in the film and television it has created, serving only as a backdrop rather than a main character, and *Hopscotch* has countered this by giving Los Angeles a starring role.

Throughout the performances, each of the opera's 36 chapters is live streamed back to *Hopscotch's* main hub at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, and for scenes that take place outside of the limousines, one audience member per group is provided with a cellphone to film the action themselves.



"The way that most of us really experience Los Angeles is by driving through it and listening to our own music on the radio and living in our own kind of private world," Sharon said. "I thought, wouldn't it be amazing if we could use music to really transform our view of the city and also the reality of the city around us."

Hopscotch is certainly a modern operatic experience — guests arrived in jeans and tennis shoes, and it is an active experience, to say the least — there's no chance of dozing off in your seat during this performance.

"For me, what makes this so special is the immersive and interactive aspects of it," said Ashley Leonard, who purchased *Hopscotch* tickets for her boyfriend Anthony Lioi's birthday. "You're not just a spectator sitting there minding your own business. You're involved and you're encouraged to participate to an extent. We're drawn to things like that."

The couple said they were already fans of interactive performances and had been looking forward to *Hopscotch* after hearing about *Invisible Cities* last year, but said the mobile opera still managed to exceed their expectations.

"Hearing the trumpet in time with the music that was being played and sung and performed inside the car, and then all of a sudden it transcends the little space that we're in and it's out on the street, it was perfectly surreal," Lioi said.

For those unable to snag a ticket or visit the main hub, you can watch animated videos of the opera, which runs through Nov. 22, online, some of which are included below.

Link: <http://mashable.com/2015/11/08/hopscotch-opera-review/#Nmx7yrbfpEqG>

FAST COMPANY

October 29, 2015

TRAFFIC JAM: "HOPSCOTCH" ORCHESTRATES OPERA ON WHEELS IN LOS ANGELES

By Hugh Hart

The streets of Los Angeles play host over the next three weekends to an audacious experiment organized by director Yuval Sharon. His mission: re-invent 21st-century opera one limousine at a time. On Saturday Sharon's opera company [The Industry](#) is rolling out [Hopscotch](#), composed by six musicians and performed in a fleet of automobiles for audience members who'll be seated inches from the musicians.

[Sharon](#) and production designer Jason H. Thompson brainstormed the concept in 2012 while prepping the company's Pulitzer Prize-nominated piece *Invisible Cities*, in which opera goers gathered at L.A.'s historic Union Station train terminal and listened through headphones to wirelessly transmitted music. "By getting audience to put on headphones and pay attention to the everyday life that surrounded them, that production had a lot to do with what I call 'the poetics of noticing,'" explains Sharon. "So then I became fascinated with the idea: What if the car became the stage? What if the car became a platform for performance? How could music then alter your perception of the city as you're driving through it?"

SERENADED ON A JOURNEY, DESTINATION UNKNOWN

The Industry team assembled a small army of about 240 musicians, technicians and chauffeurs to get *Hopscotch* moving. As Sharon explains it, the project requires a leap of faith on the part of mobile opera fans. "You buy a ticket and get an email with a start time and a street address," he says. "When you get to the location, two cars pull up. Four of you get in one car and four of you get in the other car. The musicians and singers are already inside waiting so you're knee to knee with the performers. You have no idea where the car is going but you drive for a fair amount of time listening to one chapter of the story. Then you arrive at an intersection where the door opens for you and another car is waiting for you. You get into that car where other musicians and singers perform the next chapter of the story."

To further keep audience members on their toes, *Hopscotch* libretto, which follows existential misadventures of Lucia, Jamison and Orlando, is partitioned into three color-coded routes and related in non-chronological order. "You might get the climactic scene as your very first scene, or it might be the last," Sharon says. "You'll get enough of the story on any one route, but you won't get that arc in the traditional way."

The routes are mapped out to coordinate with each limousine's drive by music, Sharon notes. "For some chapters we've had to figure out which streets feel particularly despairing? Which streets make you feel incredibly elated driving through them? We often take streets for granted they're like a no mans land between point A and point B. With *Hopscotch*, we want you to experience streets in a completely fresh way."

The free-range *Hopscotch* delivery system represents Sharon's latest effort to treat opera as an "emerging art form." Lukewarm about traditional Lyric Opera of Chicago performances he attended as a kid, Sharon later became excited about pushing the form into the 21st century after studying theater at UC Berkeley with performing arts maverick Peter Sellars and staging multi-media pieces for seven years in New York. He says, "There *issomething* aspirational about opera which is part of its pleasure and beauty, but I don't think that needs to be disconnected from everyday life."



SURREAL IN THE CITY

To illustrate the point, Sharon describes a *Hopscotch* scenario, choreographed to take place in between car rides, that literally elevates mundane urban life into the realm of the surreal. "Audience members get out of the car and the singer brings them to the top of a building," Sharon says. "She hears a trumpet player distantly from a roof top, then turns around and there's a trombone player standing on another rooftop. She begins to sing with both musicians, who play perfectly in time with each other because they're connected across this huge distance with wireless technology."

Citing one of his formative influences, Zen composer John Cage, Sharon says, "Theater exists all around us and it's the artist's job to notice it. I'm interested in using opera in the city as a springboard for some kind of sublime event."



MORE LIKE A WEB THAN AN OPERA

To expand the *Hopscotch* experience beyond the confines of cars and their passengers, The Industry commissioned [10 animated videos](#) that dramatize tentpole plot points. Additionally, each 90-minute journey will be video-streamed to a hub in downtown where people can remotely monitor the progress of all three trips simultaneously. Sharon, pictured above, says, "Once we started with driving as the central motor of the piece, we extrapolated from that to the point that *Hopscotch* has become very web-like. It's actually less of an opera and more of a web, a web of ideas and a geographic web. Everything's connected but there's no one path."

[Photos: [Joshua Lipton](#)]

Link: <http://www.fastcocreate.com/3052501/traffic-jam-hopscotch-orchestrates-opera-on-wheels-in-los-angeles>

FAST COMPANY

October 30, 2015

BEHIND THE NEXT-LEVEL INTERACTIVITY OF THE ULTIMATE AUTOMOTIVE ART PROJECT

BY SUSAN KARLIN

Imagine an opera that has audience members sharing stretch limousines with performing actors, singers, musicians, and dancers engaged on a magical mystery tour of downtown Los Angeles destinations.

Two years ago, experimental opera company The Industry pushed performance and technical boundaries with [a wireless headphone opera, *Invisible Cities*](#), that coursed through Los Angeles' Union Station. The sold-out production, in partnership with audio leader Sennheiser, earned a Pulitzer Prize nomination and inspired an Emmy-winning documentary. It also encouraged artistic director Yuval Sharon to up the ante of interaction.

This time, miles of downtown Los Angeles is the stage. [Hopscotch](#)—which runs weekends from October 31 through November 15—takes audiences in limos through three different 90-minute routes starting at different points, with stops at secret destinations (including one graveyard). Artists riding with audience members and stationed at the destinations perform random chapters of a master narrative about love and disappearance across time.

"*Hopscotch* is the culmination of five years of an artistic inquiry into the nature of opera, the relationship of spectator to the artist, and trying to find new ways to create those scenarios," says Sharon. "I often think of this opera as having three main characters—[protagonist] Lucha, Los Angeles, and the audience—because each audience member is experiencing the story in a unique way, in random chapters, with the city going by, and the music augmenting our experience of Los Angeles. In our isolated cars driving all around Los Angeles, maybe there was someplace where we could all connect."

All routes end at The Central Hub, a pop-up circular structure in the parking lot of the Southern California Institute for Architecture (Sci-Art) designed by its students as part of a production-related class. It features a circular array of 24 monitors simultaneously streaming the 24 journeys, which people can watch for free. In addition, the *Hopscotch* website offers [animated interpretations](#) of various chapters on the routes. The \$1 million production is funded by individual patrons, ticket sales, and civic, government, and foundation grants.



Audience members use GuidePort devices to switch to different audio feeds from among the Central Hub's array of 24 monitors live streaming audio and video from the routes. *Photo: Susan Karlin*



The three routes (not drawn to scale). The circle indicates the Central Hub. *Graphic courtesy of The Industry*

COLLABORATION ACROSS DISCIPLINES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The production not only involves a multidisciplinary collaboration between artists, neighborhood leaders, and sponsors, but one between the audience and the city.

Six composers, six writers, three special musical guests, more than 120 singers, actors and dancers, an aerialist, 24 drivers, and 150 sponsoring partners—including main collaborators Sennheiser (which includes Sharon in its [Momentum Project](#)), Sci-Art, and [5D World Building Studio](#). Once the production found a home for its Central Hub, its organizers located three distinct neighborhoods with their own culture and history—Boyle Heights, Historic Core, and Elysian Park/Chinatown—that could also host and connect the production team to local collaborators and talent.

"Everyone kept saying, 'What about the traffic?' says executive producer Elizabeth Cline. "Every limo has an assistant stage manager talking to the other stage managers, saying, 'I'm running a minute early or late,' and everyone knows how to cut or extend their scene based on what the other cars are doing. We created scenes that have vamping mechanisms."

In keeping with one of the story's themes of transient characters through life, one of the more curious flourishes involves characters that seem to glide through a scene for no apparent reason.

"All of a sudden, you notice a character and think, 'Why are they here? What is their significance? Do they appear in the main characters' lives in other chapters?' adds Cline. "Putting those questions out there really mimics our lives and how our identities are formed and created by the people we meet. Sometimes you never know who's going to be the core cast of your life and who's going to be the supernumerary character."



Lavalier mics are planted at points around the limo, plugging into an AVX wireless belt pack transmitter. That sends the signal to a nearby receiver plugged into a smartphone camera. The phone sends the A/V signal to the Central Hub via carrier signal using the Livestream broadcast app. *Photos: Susan Karlin, Sennheiser*

INTEGRATION WITH TECHNOLOGY

As with *Invisible Cities*, The Industry has again teamed with Sennheiser, whose audio technology enables continuous audio transmission between mobile and stationary performance sites, against the city's backdrop of digital broadcasting and RFID interference.

Limos are outfitted with Sennheiser's AVX digital wireless microphone systems, multichannel rack units in their trunks, and omnidirectional mics on their roofs to transmit audio to and from performance and production staff, and the Central Hub. One scene requires audio coordinated between three rooftops a quarter mile away from each other. "We had big artistic challenges and Sennheiser had the technology to match it," says Cline. At the Hub, Sennheiser's GuidePort wireless audio guide system and Momentum 2 headsets enable audiences to switch between the livestreamed audio feeds to create their own narrative. (Bexel Audio specialists and sound designer Brett Jarvis provide additional audio support at the Hub.)

"Non-paying audience members aren't as close to the performers, but for free, they can stand in the Hub and dial into any of the streams that are going on live," says Stefanie Reichert, Sennheiser's director of trade marketing. "The technology is the same, but each time we do these types of performances, we configure it to the task."

Ultimately, the opera's creators hope the audience will come away with a new relationship with their city. "What's so exciting about making art in public is you can see spaces differently," says Cline. "Whether an abandoned parking lot or Victorian building from early LA history, you all of a sudden have a transformed view of the other histories and stories happening there."

[Photos: Susan Karlin]

Link: <http://www.fastcocreate.com/3052785/behind-the-next-level-interactivity-of-the-ultimate-automotive-art-project>



THE NEW YORKER

November 12, 2015

Behind the Scenes of the Experimental Opera “Hopscotch”

BY ALEX ROSS



A typically intimate limo performance, with Kirsten Wiest, Cassia Streb, and Lauren Baba.

CREDITPHOTOGRAPH BY ANGIE SMITH FOR THE NEW YORKER

In this week’s issue of the magazine, I write about a remarkable experimental opera called “Hopscotch,” which has lately occupied the streets of Los Angeles. The creation of a company called The Industry, “Hopscotch” is described as a “mobile opera in twenty-four cars”: audience groups ride three simultaneous routes in limousines, and witness scenes at sites in downtown and eastern L.A. Other episodes take place within the limos or alongside them—most memorably, when an actor-motorcyclist begins communicating via wireless mike with a second actor inside the vehicle. “Hopscotch” is the brainchild of the opera director Yuval Sharon; more than two hundred people joined him in realizing the concept, including six principal composers and six librettists.

I focused on the musical side in the magazine, but “Hopscotch” also has a richly embroidered literary dimension, incorporating references to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, “Paradise Lost,” Goethe’s “Faust,” and the Situationist writings of Guy Debord, among other sources. The librettists—Tom Jacobson, Mandy Kahn, Sarah LaBrie, Jane Stephens Rosenthal, Janine Salinas Schoenberg, and Erin Young—worked in consultation with Joshua Raab, who served as the dramaturge of the project. In my piece, I should have mentioned that Young wrote the “Hades” scene and that Rosenthal wrote the finale. Dozens of others made crucial contributions; an entire section could have been devoted to the heroic logistical maneuvers of Ash Nichols, the production manager, who often resembled an air-traffic controller at the world’s strangest airport.

In late October, the photographer Angie Smith joined me for a preview of the Red Route, which wends its way through the Arts District, Hollenbeck Park, Boyle Heights, and Evergreen Cemetery. (The other routes are called Yellow and Green.) Joining us in the limos—eight four-person groups circulate on a route at any given time—were Ken Brecher and Rebecca Rickman, who appear in several of the photos below. At one point, Brecher, who runs the Library Foundation of Los Angeles, is seen holding a mobile-phone camera; it sends a live feed to the Hub, a central location in the Arts District, where all the performances can be seen and heard remotely. Later, Smith and I visited the Bradbury Building, where a crucial scene on the Yellow Route unfolds. On my own, I observed events along the L.A. River and atop a building in the Arts District.

As audiences shuttle in and out, “Hopscotch” performers keep repeating their scenes, twenty-four times in a row. It’s a curious way to spend your day, as several of them told me. While Smith was taking pictures at the Bradbury, I watched the performance from an inconspicuous position on the fifth level of the atrium. Nearby was a spot where the actor-musician Trevor Davis took brief breaks between iterations of the scene, in which he silently impersonates the troubled biker-scientist Jameson. “It’s a little like Alice in Wonderland,” Davis said, taking a bite of a sub. “Doing it over and over, I’m disappearing into this alternate universe.” The cogwheel of the Bradbury elevator was heard snapping into action, and Davis set off to perform again.

Elsewhere on the Yellow Route, the composer-guitarist Nicholas Deyoe, who co-directs an adventurous new-music series called wasteLAnd, has by now given more than a hundred limo-bound renditions of “Wedding,” a voice-and-electric-guitar piece by his colleague Andrew McIntosh. He’s learned to tailor his playing to the vagaries of the route: when he senses that the car is coming to a stop, he waits a moment to attempt a particularly precarious harmonic. (The instrument has been restrung and tuned to a microtonal scale.) Deyoe told me, “I did a lot of practicing while sitting back on my couch, because I figured it would force me to get used to playing with bad posture.”

None of this anomalous activity seemed to faze the veteran drivers of Wilshire Limousine Services, twenty-six of whom have participated in “Hopscotch.” I asked one of them, Barry Anderson, whether he had ever hosted a live performance in one of his vehicles. This being Los Angeles, the answer was, of course, yes. “I used to be Anna Nicole Smith’s driver, when she had that reality show on the E! channel,” Anderson said. “We had cameras, lighting, all that kind of stuff in the car. So, yeah, I’ve seen it all.”

Link: <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/behind-the-scenes-of-the-experimental-opera-hopscotch>

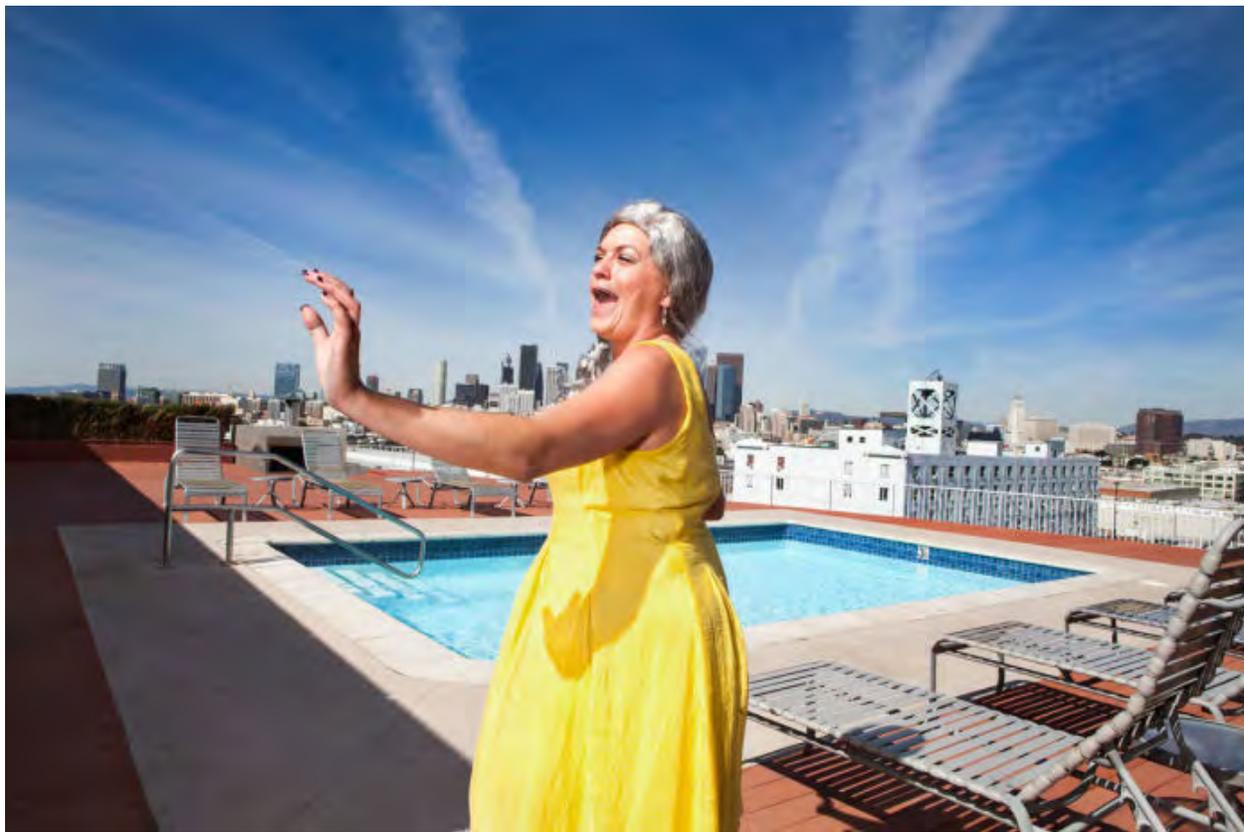


THE NEW YORKER

December 15, 2015

Notable Performances and Recordings of 2015

BY ALEX ROSS



Marja Kay in “Hopscotch.” CREDIT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANGIE SMITH FOR THE NEW YORKER

“Hopscotch,” the “mobile opera” that occupied Los Angeles this fall, left me sufficiently awestruck that I contemplated giving it three places on the following list—one for each of the routes that snaked through the city, carrying audiences in small groups. What set it apart from everything else I saw this year was the immense originality of Yuval Sharon’s conception. Six principal composers, of various stylistic backgrounds, lent their voices to the project, revelling in possibilities of mobile, outdoor, antiphonal, and participatory performance. The set pieces that they created—a trumpet and a trombone sounding from the roofs of warehouses; musicians and dancers wending their way through the Bradbury Building; a soprano singing in a Jeep that rode alongside the L.A. River—will linger in the memories of those who witnessed them. Sharon is still in the early stage of his career; what he will do next is hard to imagine.

Generally, it was a formidable year for new music—so much so that my ten notable recordings are entirely contemporary, with dead composers demoted to the honorable-mention category. Many of these works have an intangible quality in common, one that’s hard to name. Sonic landscapes shimmer before one’s ears, but they are too irregular and restless to be classified as minimalist or ambient. Instead, they suggest an ominous stasis, an unstable stillness. That atmosphere encompasses such otherwise disparate creations as Scott Worthington’s “Prism,” for solo double bass; Michael Pisaro’s “A Mist Is a Collection of Points,” for piano, percussion, and sine waves; and Anna Thorvaldsdottir’s “In the Light of Air,” for instrumental ensemble. Then again, Andrew Norman’s “Play” and Ted Hearne’s “The Source” offer rapid-shifting textures, spasms of nervous energy. Together, all this music suggests a world at once hurtling forward and spinning in place—very much the state in which we live.

I ask indulgence for the inclusion of a memorial for a close friend: the Chicago-based critic, author, and broadcaster Andrew Patner, who died on February 3rd, at the age of fifty-five. The event that was held in his honor, at Orchestra Hall in Chicago, did more than celebrate a wise, generous, joyous spirit; it delivered a musical program of considerable interest. Leif Ove Andsnes played, via video, the last of Schoenberg’s Pieces, Opus 19; Riccardo Muti, speaking on tape, dedicated a recording of Mozart’s “Soave sia il vento” to Andrew’s memory; musicians from the Chicago Symphony gathered in the hall to play Bach, Mozart, and Brahms. The last gesture was especially remarkable, for orchestral players seldom cherish the memory of critics. Andrew was different, however; his love of music was inseparable from his love of community. He taught me and countless others that music is, above all, an act of connection.

Here are ten notable performances of 2015, with links to reviews.

March 7th: Björk, who turned fifty in November, made her Carnegie Hall début in a program of songs from her latest album, “Vulnicura,” with the backing of string players from Alarm Will Sound. Her singing was at once technically impeccable and emotionally raw; her music had the weight of a modernist-minimalist song cycle.

March 18th: A Celebration of Andrew Patner.

April 1st and 2nd: They have appeared on my end-of-year lists twice before, but there is no denying the slow-gathering power of Philippe Herreweghe and the Collegium Vocale Gent in the music of Bach. This year I saw them perform the St. John Passion on consecutive nights, in Antwerp and in Herreweghe’s home town of Gent.

June 11th-14th: At the Ojai Festival, one of the world’s great new-music gatherings, the percussionist and conductor Steven Schick unleashed an almost unmanageable quantity of events, at all hours of the day and night. ICE’s rendition of Anna Thorvaldsdottir’s “In the Light of Air” made the deepest impression, with an early-morning account of Morton Feldman’s “For Philip Guston” close behind.

June 15th: Amid a spate of ineffectual American operas on inoffensive themes, David T. Little’s “Dog Days,” which had its première in 2012 and which I saw in a presentation by the L.A. Opera, is stunning in its ferocity. A portrait of a family degenerating into barbarism in the wake

of an unspecified apocalypse, it is something like the “Walking Dead” of modern opera. The Prototype Festival will bring it to New York next month.

July 23rd: The Ensemble Musikfabrik production of Harry Partch’s “Delusion of the Fury” played to sell-out crowds at the Lincoln Center Festival, demonstrating that unstintingly avant-garde works can have popular impact. Lincoln Center’s other constituents have yet to learn this lesson.

Sept. 24th: Sonya Yoncheva, in an otherwise uninspired “Otello” at the Met, gave an immaculate, finely shaded, uncommonly vivid account of the role of Desdemona.

Oct. 2nd: The bluntest political statement of the musical year came, a bit surprisingly, from Laurie Anderson, famous for her deadpan irony. Her installation “Habeas Corpus,” at the Park Avenue Armory, paid homage to Mohammed el Gharani, who, while still a boy, had been imprisoned and tortured at Guantánamo. Subsequent events have made Anderson’s protest seem forlorn, though no less necessary.

Oct. 31st: “Hopscotch.”

Dec. 4th: The Street Symphony, an organization led by the L.A. Philharmonic violinist Vijay Gupta, presented excerpts from Handel’s “Messiah” at the Midnight Mission, in the grim heart of L.A.’s Skid Row. About a hundred homeless people listened intently, and burst into applause at the end. The experience left me with a clash of emotions: joy, shame, sorrow, wonder. I do not know what it meant to those who mattered.

Link: <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/notable-performances-recordings-2015>



September 25, 2015

Future Los Angeles Tops Wired's Current Best Cities of Tomorrow List

By Shayna Rose Arnold

So this is, to use a tech term, disruptive: Los Angeles has been named the #1 City of Tomorrow by Wired magazine, which looks at the inspiration and design at work in cities around the globe in its fifth annual Design issue hitting newsstands next week.

The magazine tells us that editors looked at transportation, architecture, culture, livability, and public utilities when putting together their eight-city list. In particular, L.A.'s retrofitting of 4,500 miles of streetlights with LED bulbs that "might blink if a police car or ambulance is on its way or brighten for pedestrian after a ball game"; the rise of "California Dry" landscaping in response to the state's severe drought; the \$8 billion [makeover underway at LAX](#); and an upcoming 96-seat pop-up opera event called *Hopscotch*, which will be performed in limos and SUVs driving around downtown this November, pushed Los Angeles to the top.

Shanghai, China; Medellin, Colombia; Eindhoven, the Netherlands; Mecca, Saudi Arabia; Nairobi, Kenya; San Francisco (Go team USA!); and Dubai, United Arab Emirates also made the cut.

Link: <http://www.lamag.com/citythinkblog/future-los-angeles-tops-wireds-current-best-cities-of-tomorrow-list/>



November 5, 2015

One Last Chance to See L.A.'s Wildly Innovative Car Opera

By Neal Broverman

Hopscotch adds two shows but expect them to sell out



Everyone is talking about *Hopscotch: A Mobile Opera for 24 Cars*, an incredibly ambitious staging from local theater company **The Industry** and Yuval Sharon, who conceived and directed the piece.

As its name would imply, the opera takes place in and around moving vehicles, transporting audience members in limousines around Downtown and other easterly neighborhoods like Elysian Park and Boyle Heights. Three different routes offer varied experiences, each with eight cars featuring a nonsequential portion of the opera, which is an L.A. set story with a Latina protagonist. Riders hop on, hop off, ascend to the tops of buildings and hillsides to listen to the work of a dozen librettists and 150 performers. The finale takes place near Sci-ARC in the Arts District, where anyone can watch streaming videos of the live performances for free.

The novel art form—though not exactly new—has captivated Los Angeles since its first performance on Halloween. *Hopscotch* stages its performances on weekends, and sold out its entire run that ends on November 15—that was until they extended the performance for the following weekend. Tickets are now on sale for the **November 21 and 22** performances. Unlike the traffic these performances take place in, these tickets are moving fast.

Link: <http://www.lamag.com/driver/one-last-chance-to-see-l-a-s-wildly-innovative-car-opera/#sthash.xIK04J5a.dpuf>

KCET

October 28, 2015

Hopscotch: A Mobile Opera For 24 Cars

By Maxwell Williams



When you imagine a traditional opera, a simple image comes to mind. It is most likely staged on a baroque set in some regal theatre. The actors are confined to the space between stage right and stage left. The voluminous orchestra plays in a bifurcating pit, a *bergschrand* between the audience and the singers. One composer will write the opera, so that it is usually called something like Mozart's "The Magic Flute" or Verdi's "Rigoletto" or Monteverdi's "L'Orfeo." Now forget all that, and strip opera down to its bare-boned elements: the music, the singers, and the story. Then add 24 limos. That's "Hopscotch," an ambitious new opera directed by Yuval Sharon and produced by The Industry.

It is set in 24 limousines and various locations around the North East and downtown neighborhoods of Los Angeles. It is as intimate as an embrace -- singing and playing can happen inches away from you in the cars -- and about as participatory in that viewers are tasked with holding iPhones as the opera is livestreamed to a pavilion in the parking lot of Southern

California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc). Each viewer sees nine of the 36 chapters, and the ones they do see are not in chronological order.

"Hopscotch" couldn't be more different from than the usual preconceptions of an opera.

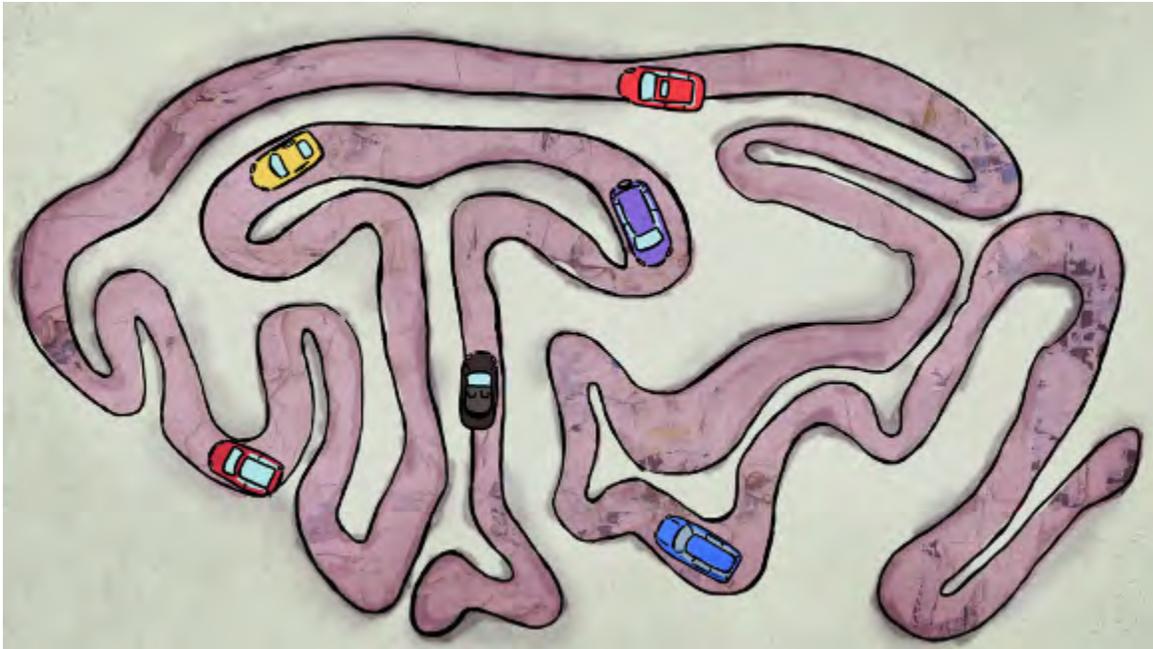


Image: Courtesy of The Industry.

On my recent "Hopscotch" journey, I climbed into a limousine underneath the L.A. River Viaduct, with a pair of strangers from Topanga Canyon, none of us knowing quite what to expect. The limo took off scooting around Chinatown while a woman sang *a cappella*, before stopping on Gin Ling Road in Chinatown, where a chapter involving a Roma fortuneteller took place. We then hopped into another limo, which curled up Elysian Park's wispy roads, where another chapter took place in an airstream trailer, and then an aria of four saxophones serenaded us at a point looking out over Dodger Stadium. Soon, we entered a limo outfitted with a Sennheiser wireless microphone system, and a motorcycle sidled up next to us, the rider having an intimate mic'd-up conversation with an actor inside the limo. This was the "Green Route" (there is also a "Red Route" and a "Yellow Route").

The story follows Lucha, a young woman who falls in love with a man named Jameson after hitting his motorcycle with her car. After Jameson disappears, Lucha marries her best friend Orlando, and the later chapters pertain to a maturing Lucha looking back at her life. During a press conference after a preview of the opera, Sharon pointed to a quote from Kierkegaard as a jumping off point: "It really is true what philosophy tells us, that life must be understood backwards. But with this, one forgets the second proposition, that it must be lived forwards."

This quote is a curious peg, especially with the knowledge that viewers may come away feeling the opera they just saw was a piecemeal version of a whole. Sharon says he isn't worried if the audience might be frustrated or confused. "I'm sure the audience is confused by a lot," he says. "I wouldn't be surprised. But I hope that the confusion is not one that is too perplexing, but actually

that the challenge of the narrative structure I hope is one that's a pleasure. Because opera is very challenging. I hope that what we're doing is inviting people to draw in further and further into the piece."

Sharon says he likes that the structure allows audiences to decide how deeply they want to engage the piece. "An audience member that lets the music and story wash over them as they watch the world go by, and they're suddenly thrown into another musical universe and another emotional landscape, that connects to their own journey that they're going through," he says. "I love the openness of that. That's something that we've been looking at within The Industry is how to create these open matrices, that the operas that we're creating are not closed systems. Your participation as an audience member actually completes the work."

I jokingly told musical director Marc Lowenstein that I had a sense of "route envy" when I heard others discussing their experiences. He concurred that there was a certain inclination for an audience member to want to see the entirety of an artwork, but that the missing parts offer an interesting opportunity to engage with the rest of the work. "Opera is a nice realization that all art is imperfect," he says, "and that there is this general incompleteness, so yeah, you do leave frustrated. 'What are the other chapters? I don't know.' But if you see the totality of any artwork, it's always, in its nature, incomplete. At its best, part of the art pushes you out into thinking about that incompleteness."



Maria Elena Altany, singer in "Hopscotch." | Photo: Courtesy of The Industry.

The incredibly layered and complex "Hopscotch" was gestated during another experimental opera, *Invisible Cities*, which was held during rush hour at Union Station to audiences that were provided headphones. Sharon and production designer Jason H. Thompson goaded each other into something even more perplexing than that production. "It was a challenge that we were daring each other: 'What's harder than 'Invisible Cities' that will make completing 'Invisible Cities' seem easy?'" Sharon says with a laugh. "We started thinking about driving. Fortunately,

the idea really stuck. When we had an off day, and we were needing to clear our minds where the possibilities were still new, we would drive around L.A. and start thinking about sites that would seem appropriate for this project."

Sharon mentions that car culture in Los Angeles was a primary interest to him -- both in positive and negative ways -- and that the solitude that Angelenos experience every day stirred him. "The idea that in our isolated cars driving all around Los Angeles, maybe, hopefully, there's someplace where we all connect," he says.



Nicholas Deyoe, musician in "Hopscotch." | Photo: Courtesy of The Industry.

But to drive around a city as a moveable opera is another story. Elizabeth Cline, the executive director of The Industry, credits the already mobile nature of the city, and its support for the arts as a major boon to the project. "I can't think of many cities where a small non-profit like ours can sit down with a city's department of transportation almost monthly to get advice on how to make an artwork," she says.

In all, there are over 120 singers, musicians, writers, and crew members making sure "Hopscotch" runs smoothly. "'Hopscotch' is a group of artists, a production team, and an audience making artwork in real-time [in] response to a city," Cline adds. "Because we're experience so many elements all at once, doing so many new things for first time, there was never a roadmap. We had to test everything out in the field."

Even the writing process was unique, a sort of exquisite corpse that somehow coalesced. "We got together and did a game, where we [worked] with different composers," says one of the six writers Erin Young, a young author who had never worked on an opera before. "[Yuval and Marc] said, 'Here's a setting. What would you do in this setting?' Then we all worked collaboratively on a theme, and then we broke off into composer-writer teams. And then we had a whole script, and then we went through and read it."

Lowenstein said that the story benefited from the broadly unique viewpoints. "We really wanted lots of independent voices in this kaleidoscopic mosaic telling the story of one person's life," said Lowenstein about how the writing fit into the theme of growing old and remembering the past. "If you look back on your own life, it's almost like you were a different person 20 years ago."



Members of the "Hopscotch" production team: Kira Qwan, Central Hub manager; Elizabeth Cline, executive producer (executive director, The Industry); Yuval Sharon, director (founder and artistic director, The Industry); and Ash Nichols, production manager.

In the end, you are left with a vision so infuriating that it's beautiful; so disjointed, it somehow makes total sense; so vast, yet incredibly intimate. It's a production that not only couldn't be done in any other city, but stands up on an international level as an example of where opera might go in the future. And someday, we may all look back at opera, and see this as a point in time when the opera world began to change and offer performances that reflect our current time without pandering to it. And that could save what for many might seem like an anachronistic form. It's a daunting task, but one that Sharon seems up for. "When I started The Industry five years ago, there were two primary missions," says Sharon. "The first was to expand the definition of opera with new work, and the second was to engage and excite a new audience for the art form."

Link: <http://www.kcet.org/arts/artbound/counties/los-angeles/hopscotch-opera-the-industry-yuval-sharon.html>

October 27, 2015

Car Hop: The Industry's Mobile Opera Hopscotch Takes to the Streets

By Jim Farber



In "Hades" (Chapter 26 of the Green Route) music by David Rosenboom, text by Erin Young, Rebekah Barton (as Lucha) longs for Jameson (Nicholas LaGesse) along the Los Angeles River (Styx) (Photo by Jim Farber

The creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act. —Marcel Duchamp.

Kirsten Ashley Wiest stands on the corner as if frozen in space and time, spectral, a Day of the Dead figure who might have stepped out of a painting by Frida Kahlo. Her face is made up as a deathmask, her long dress is crimson, accentuated by a cascade of golden chains around her neck. Totally silent, she is observed by four "audience" members who are about to embark on the Industry's mobile opera, Hopscotch.

A long black stretch-limousine pulls up, its roof festooned with rippling red flags indicating this is the Red Route (one of the opera's three completely different road trips). A production representative in white gloves silently beckons us into the car. Inside sits lyric tenor Orson Van Gay II (as the forlorn artist, Orlando) and a pair of identically costumed violists in blue and white pinafores like twin Alices in Wonderland.

Then Wiest, representing the spirit of Orlando's recently deceased wife (Sarita) enters the car and sits as a ghostly presence across from him. The doors close. The Alices begin to play. Gay sings a lament to his departed wife as the car glides into one of the oldest cemeteries in Los Angeles.

This is just one of the unforgettable and decidedly surreal moments from Hopscotch, which will have its premiere performances (three a day) beginning on Oct. 31 — appropriately, for the departed spirit of Sarita — on Halloween.

This fantastically complicated project (logistically, musically, and dramatically) is the brainchild of The Industry's founding director, Yuval Sharon. More than two years in creation, it is a collaboration in the best and wildest sense, featuring a sung and spoken libretto (in English and Spanish) by six writers (none of whom have ever written for opera before): Tom Jacobson, Mandy Kahn, Sarah LaBrie, Jane Stephens Rosenthal, Janine Salinas Schoenberg, and Erin Young; with music by no less than six Los Angeles composers: The Industry's music director Marc Lowenstein, Veronika Krausas, Andrew McIntosh, Andrew Norman, Ellen Reid, and David Rosenboom.

It is also a production that quite literally stars the city of Los Angeles. And for many people, the experience will be the equivalent of visiting a foreign country as the opera's three routes (Red, Green, and Yellow) weave their way through the architectural, geographical, historical, and cultural landscape of the city — whether it's a cemetery in Boyle Heights, the banks of the Los Angeles River, the cramped interior of an Airstream trailer, or the interior splendor of the Million Dollar Theater and Bradbury Building (which were both featured in the film Blade Runner).



"Car Wash" (inside an Airstream trailer). Music by Veronika Krausas. Text by Guy Debord. Victoria Fox as Mother. Brandon Davis Tuba. Ben Finley, bass (Photo by Jim Farber)

And then there is The Central Hub, an electronic vortex designed by the teachers and students of the Southern California Institute of Architecture, SCI-Arc. Here, for free, anyone can come and watch live video feeds from the cars and locations as they travel along all three routes.

For Yuval Sharon (who may be Orson Welles for the 21st Century) Hopscotch represents his first completely personal project for The Industry. Prior to its creation he oversaw the company's first site-specific, wandering opera, Christopher Cerrone's Invisible Cities. That project, which unfolded amid the hustle and bustle of L.A.'s Union Station, combined audience members, singers, musicians and dancers

with unsuspecting travelers and the city's itinerant homeless. If that project seemed complex, Hopscotch is logarithmically more so.

"This production may represent the last semblance of sanity I have left," says Sharon with a laugh. "Two-and-a-half years ago we thought, what could be more difficult than Invisible Cities? We wanted to continue the idea of introducing Los Angeles to Los Angeles. And that's when the idea of an opera in cars began to take shape, since cars and Los Angeles are synonymous."

The original idea for Hopscotch, Sharon says, was sketched out on a table napkin.

"I know it sounds funny, but it's turned out almost exactly as it was originally envisioned. The idea was that there would be multiple routes that worked their way back to a central point. Two and a half years later we're doing exactly what we sketched out. Specifics have changed, but the basic idea of an intimate musical experience in cars has remained the same."

The original literary stimulus, Sharon says, was a surrealist novel called, Hopscotch, by the Mexican writer, Julio Cortázar.



"Farewell From the Rooftops (Chapter 33 on the Red Route composed by Ellen Reid) featuring soprano Marja Lisa Kay and violinist Orin Hildestad (Photo by Jim Farber)

"Cortázar describes the book as 'an anti-novel' because you do not necessarily read it front to back," Sharon explains. "Instead you can follow an alternate path through the narrative beginning with Chapter 57, then going to Chapter 112 and then Chapter 1. So you're jumping all around the story. It's very disorienting. And we wanted to mirror that sense of disorientation by jumping from one chapter to another in the lives of the characters."

After repeated efforts, however, Sharon was unable to obtain the rights to adapt the novel. But instead of a set back, the "failure" turned out to be the production's liberation day.

"It freed us and allowed us to start over," Sharon explains. "We could look at the project in a whole new way. That was about a year-and-a-half ago. We created our own 36- chapter storyline that follows a group of Los Angeles residents whose lives intersect. And just as in the novel, the chapters are presented deliberately out of sequence. The only way to experience the complete story is through the synopsis, to travel all three routes, or watch them unfold at the Central Hub. It's a dream puzzle you put together any way you want and no two people will experience it the same way."

Another influence, says Sharon, was the 2012 French film, *Holy Motors* directed by Leos Carax. In the film, from dawn 'til dusk, a shadowy character named Monsieur Oscar travels through Paris in a white limousine. But each time he emerges from the car he has adopted a new persona as a completely different character. At one point the driver inquires, "What are you doing this for?" To which the man replies, "For the beauty of the act."

"I loved that," says Sharon. "That notion that the face of the central character changes every time he steps from the car was inspirational."

Another influence, says Sharon, was a radical, French theater group in the 1960s, led by Guy Debord, who called themselves The Situationists.

"They were all about shaking up everyday life. They would take people on these disorienting 'floating' walking tours of Paris."

The Story

The 36 chapters focus on a principal trio of characters: Lucha, Jameson, and Orlando. At the same time the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice becomes thematically interwoven. Each character is multiply cast and identifiable by a recurring costume (designed by Ann Cross-Farley and Kate Bergh) that acts as a visual reminder. The production's evocative set designs are by Jason Thompson.



As its grand finale (composed by Andrew Norman) all three routes of Hopscotch converge at the Central Hub, bringing the entire cast together framed by the video monitors that have been relaying their performances live (Photo by Jim Farber)

The effect becomes cinematic as the windows of the car frame the real world outside. Is that a character in the story or a chance encounter? Is that person on the motorcycle gliding alongside the limo part of the show? Yes! Ultimately, grasping the entire narrative is, by design, almost impossible, like trying to connect all the details of a dream.

"It's a process of moving from complete discombobulation to clarity," says composer Veronika Krausas. "You move from something convoluted and confusing to something more like a fragmented memory."

The Music

The range of musical expression from the six composers is as varied as the landscapes— from cool minimalism, to rock and jazz. The majority of the scores are performed by live musicians. Other sections have been pre-recorded so they can be played back in the car to live vocal accompaniment. The pairing of composers and chapters, Krausas says, was a group decision. And because the chapters are not specifically related, the composers were allowed to use a wide variety of different instrumentation and musical styles.

“There were no preconceived boundaries regarding tonality, instrumentation, and style. It was pure, fortuitous synergy that gives the piece its melodic flow, not conscious design.”

The Logistics

It’s almost impossible to imagine the labyrinthine complexity of Hopscotch. Each route (which covers miles of the city) involves intricate timing, so as one chapter ends, the next can begin. No less than 24 limousines circumnavigate the three routes, gliding into place as one audience group (a maximum of 4 per car) gets out and the next group gets in. There are also fixed locations inside historic buildings, on rooftops, in parks and on the banks of Los Angeles River, which stands in for the River Styx.

As music director Marc Lowenstein explains, “This show has an enormous production staff. There is an overall production manager and a production stage manager. Every route has its own stage manager. Each scene has its own assistant stage manager. Each location also has its own audience liaison. To that add three complete casts of singers, dancers, and musicians. It’s Yuval’s inspiration, but it’s been a very collaborative effort from the start, whether it was in the choice of the locations, working on the script/libretto with the writers, or finding the right musical expression for each chapter.”

Richard Wagner imagined opera as the total fusion of art forms. Were he to experience Hopscotch, Herr Wagner might be confused, but he would be smiling.

Link: <https://www.sfcv.org/preview/the-industry/car-hop-the-industry%E2%80%99s-mobile-opera-hopscotch-takes-to-the-streets>

SOUND & VISION

October 27, 2015

Hopscotch: A Mobile Opera and One Incredible Journey through Los Angeles

By Lauren Dragan



The moment I sat in the limo, I should have known: I am no longer in the driver's seat. Two women in yellow, two aspects of the same character, sit forehead to forehead, motionless save their unified breathing. The limo door shuts, and we are in motion. Music plays through the sound system, and the women begin to sing. They writhe around each other, occasionally splitting apart only to meet again.

The window rolls down, seemingly by itself, and from the loading dock of a building, a trumpet blares like an eerie car horn in traffic. The window rolls up; we're still moving. The music escalates in emotional pitch as the car circles a loop again and again, the window rolling down and up, each time revealing an additional trumpeter; the sound as we pass gaining in intensity and dissonance until suddenly, we stop. One woman in yellow breaks off, jumps out of the car, and is enveloped in a massive black cloth that covers the limo. She sings and struggles against the blackness and the window. She escapes; we are whisked away.

This was my first journey into [Hopscotch](#), a new opera by avant-garde production company, [The Industry](#). After experiencing their show [Invisible Cities](#), the headphone opera performed at Los Angeles' Union Station, I should have known I was in for something challenging, innovative, complex, and epic. I had no idea. Hopscotch fractures everything you think you know about opera, and forces you to stretch

your brain to reference aspects of art, music, science, history, and architecture that you probably didn't even realize that you'd known or forgotten.

The show takes place in and out of various cars, with audience members riding along, following characters into buildings, through parks, on rooftops, in elevators, and out again. There are three separate routes; color coded red, yellow, and green, that each have their own chapters which make up part of the larger story. One of the four audience members in each car is handed a mobile phone that streams the performance back to a central hub. But wait, we'll get there, eventually. We're moving again.



Now we're walking, following a young actor in a leather jacket into a studio space. Inside, two singers: one with a marionette in a yellow skirt, and another performing as an aerialist, swirl and sing in spikes of light. They are telling the story of Orpheus, the mythical musician who chased his love into hell, only to lose her when he, against instruction, turns to look back at her



A love story begins. As we follow the actors outside into the light, the city of Los Angeles invades our consciousness. A woman bicycles by. She is singing now. She is part of the performance. There is graffiti: two names in a heart, carved into a light pole. Is that part of the show? No matter, it is now. That's just how Hopscotch works.

We're in a limo again, and a man in a leather jacket is adjusting the levels of water in a glass, tapping it with a stick, checking the pitch, and creating a melody. A beautifully acted voiceover plays through the sound system. We zoom through tunnels, and the windows drop, and I realize that the large box I'd noticed strapped to the roof of the vehicle was a projector, and now animation is being cast onto the walls of the tunnel as we pass. It's moving. We're moving. We're with the character Jameson, and at first, it's hard to tell where we are in his timeline.



But that's the very idea: we are presented chapters of a central story, out of order, and without access to the entire book. Like a chance meeting with a new person in the city, it is up to the audience member to decide if and how they want to explore further and deeper into the larger narrative.

You can be a part of the show on all three routes, watch omnisciently from the central hub, piece it all together from one route with the help of a book provided at the end of the show, fill in more gaps with the addition of animated segments available online, or just sit back and go along for the ride. That said, even after viewing all aspects, Hopscotch is a puzzle that is missing a piece, and thus requires the audience to fill in the gaps. Like it or not, your perception is part of the story, too.

Hopscotch is not only a love story about people, but a love story about Los Angeles. The routes explore a five mile radius around the arts district and intertwine the action with iconic landmarks like the Bradbury building, Elysian Park, and The Million Dollar Theater. As we hop in and out of cars, Los Angeles becomes a character. There is literally nowhere else in the world this show could be performed.



As we are in the public space the public blends in and out of your awareness. Some people stop and watch the show with you, whipping out a smartphone. Some are so engrossed in their own lives that a man dressed in a lab coat furiously pacing the street doesn't raise an eyebrow.



The buildings or actions outside sometimes grab your attention, sometimes it's as though there's nothing in the world but what's the inside of your car. If there's a better way to express life in LA, I don't know what it is.



As we complete our circuit, our car pulls into the center hub. It's a huge architectural structure that echoes the fractal designs in one of the animations I watched before the show. The central hub is filled with television screens, each live-streaming a chapter, and hub audience members are fitted with a set of wireless Sennheiser headphones. You're invited to walk about in the round, viewing each chapter as it unfolds somewhere in the city of Los Angeles in real time.

One by one, all of the players from the show arrive in cars and emerge into the center. It's time for the grand finale. This happens once a day, at the end of the 2:45pm performance. Each actor mills about, singing their own list of thoughts, adding to a rising din as more and more join in.



They stand beside us, among us, and as I take in the scene, I'm struck with just how enormous an undertaking Hopscotch is. From permits with the Department of Transportation, to dozens of actors and musicians, to stage managers and professional drivers, Hopscotch is amazingly smooth and seamless in spite of the complexity.

What's more is the incredible use of technology: wireless mics in moving cars, signal towers on rooftops, headphones that respond to your location in the hub, headbands that read your brainwaves and change the recorded performance (yes, really), projectors spewing animation on tunnels, cameras in the hands of the audience, broadcasting to another audience, live. All cogs working together so flawlessly in the background that all we as an audience experience is the art.

I look up at a screen. Back in the performance studio, The man in the leather jacket knocks something over. The music stops. The scene moves on, outside, and a question is projected onto the floor as we exit



The idea of a journey, into hell, through past and future, and back is central to Hopscotch, and it is expressed using nearly every form of artistic expression: music, acting, video, animation, architecture, and even interactive new media. Like the very streets we drive, the story winds in and out, starting and stopping like the infamous LA traffic. We experience what we can, as best we can, before we're carried away to the next chapter. But there's no time to contemplate that now: the car is here, and it will leave without us.

Hopscotch opens October 31st and runs weekends through November 15th. Tickets for riding in the cars are available at HopscotchOpera.com. Viewing at the Central Hub is free, but first-come-first-served starting at 12:30pm.

Link: <http://www.soundandvision.com/content/hopscotch-mobile-opera-24-cars-and-all-los-angeles#vsGOh5LRjBjxMM5c.97>



November 6, 2015

Hitting the Road with The Industry's Hopscotch

By Sheila Tepper

Hopscotch, from LA's experimental opera company The Industry, plays out with the audience traveling to unknown destinations throughout Los Angeles. The action unfolds both inside and outside the car, along three routes (Red, Green and Yellow) with eight "chapters" per route. Each chapter lasts ten minutes and the audience experiences them unsequentially.

Tickets are required to travel the routes (and the opera runs until November 22nd), but anyone can go to the Central Hub, open in Downtown Los Angeles Saturdays and Sundays from 12:30-4, to watch all the chapters play out via livestream (and for free). This weekend, visitors to the Central Hub have a chance to win discounted tickets to live performances the weekend of November 14th and 15th.



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/21779481@N08/22439096449>

To hear about the production from The Industry's founder Yuval Sharon, click here for his recent interview on KUSC's Arts Alive.

We also spoke with Industry Music Director Marc Lowenstein about pulling together the pieces of Hopscotch:

<https://soundcloud.com/arts-alive/the-industrys-marc-lowenstein-on-pulling-together-the-pieces-of-hopscotch>

Photos from Chapter 25: The Other Woman (Yellow route). This scene took place at the Bradbury Building and included a percussionist, a saxophonist, and dancers from LA's Ate9 dance company.



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/21779481@N08/22208527784>



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/21779481@N08/22842434511>



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/21779481@N08/22439098519>

Photos from Chapter 22: Despair (Yellow route). As this chapter started, the performer was outside the car as it was moving, then she opened the door and jumped in.



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/21779481@N08/22842434631>

Photo from Chapter 12: The Wedding (Yellow route).



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/21779481@N08/22805250766>

Link: <http://www.kusc.org/blog/artsalive/blogentry.aspx?BlogEntryID=10671619>



October 29, 2015

The Opera of the Open Road

By Eddie Kim

Imagine going out to see an opera in Downtown. The idea brings to mind tuxedos and ball gowns, the grand Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the flutters of movement as the orchestra warms up, and the reveal of a tricked-out set when the lights come down and the curtain finally ascends.



None of these things exist in the groundbreaking new work from the three-year-old company The Industry. Instead, *Hopscotch* is an automobile opera, a 90-minute performance in which audience members, in groups of four, ride in a series of cars with musicians, singers and actors, stopping at various locations for site-based performances. It opens on Saturday, Oct. 31.

Broken into 36 chapters and built around the characters of Lucha, Jameson and Orlando, *Hopscotch* is drastically different than warhorses such as *Madama Butterfly* or *Aida*. Instead, the arias and the acting occur in vehicles and on the open road.

That's just one unlikely aspect. A sense of doubt and questions about fate and future weave through *Hopscotch*, and the storyline is complicated by the opera's having three different routes. Audience members pick between a red, yellow or green path; each one covers a certain series of chapters, giving the experience an episodic feel.

While every ticket buyer gets only a fragment of the full story, Yuval Sharon, the artistic director of The Industry, said each route works as a complete experience.

"It was clear when we designed this that the audience would be starting and stopping in totally different parts of the story. So each moment needed to be a potential beginning and end," he said. "Starting with characters in love is so different than starting where there's death and despair."

Cars After Headphones

Sharon is used to unique takes on opera. In 2013, The Industry unveiled *Invisible Cities*, an opera based on a 1972 Italian novel. It was mounted in an active Union Station. Audiences wore high-tech headsets that allowed them to hear the score and singing as they meandered through the transit hub, watching dancers and performers appear and disappear amid commuter crowds.

While working on the opera, Sharon began brainstorming an exponentially larger project, one built on multiple cars traveling throughout Los Angeles. It made *Invisible Cities* look easy by comparison, he thought at the time.



"It's always nice to have other projects that percolate as fantasies while you're doing something else," he remarked. "*Invisible Cities* needed to become real.

This other project developing in my mind helped me keep things in perspective.”

The idea kept bubbling, and once *Invisible Cities* closed, Sharon dove into the project. *Hopscotch* runs every Saturday and Sunday through Nov. 15. Tickets are \$125-\$175.

The audiences of approximately 300 people a day meet at several different start points within five miles of what is dubbed the “Central Hub,” located in the parking lot of the Southern California Institute of Architecture. They climb into one of 24 cars and the story slips into the background of Lucha and Jameson. She loves puppets, a passion she shares with Orlando and his wife, Sarita, who are both puppeteers. Jameson, on the other hand, is an obsessive scientist who moved from the East Coast to work at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena.

Lucha and Jameson meet by chance at a puppet rehearsal and fall in love. They marry and seemingly have a happy life, but Jameson grows distant as he falls deeper into his research on the human mind. Soon he disappears altogether, without a word to Lucha. Meanwhile, Sarita dies and Orlando realizes he has feelings for Lucha, which he reveals in an awkward moment. Her rejection inspires him to move to Paris. *Hopscotch*’s finale picks up years later, when he returns in search of Lucha.

Most performances conclude back at the initial departure point, but end-of-day shows converge at the Central Hub. While the story sounds linear, it all happens in a series of vehicles traveling throughout Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

At one moment a character will be singing, or playing an instrument, mere feet from you in the back of a limo. At another, you may be ushered out of the car to see a scene unfold in Boyle Heights’ Hollenbeck Park, with passersby staring curiously at the action.

Huge Crew

While tickets are limited, there are other free ways to enjoy *Hopscotch*. Those who show up at the Central Hub during a performance — it is open to the public — can watch the action being live streamed from all the vehicles. The live performances are intercut with animated chapters, which are also available online. Central Hub visitors get headsets allowing them to choose from the different audio streams.

The show is as complicated to put together as it sounds. Sharon collaborated with six main composers and six writers to create the score and script. Altogether, *Hopscotch* utilizes more than 200 cast, crew and creative members.

“Initially I was a little overwhelmed by the complexity of it all,” said Kirsten Wiest, who plays Sarita. “After the first weekend of rehearsals I was shocked

with how smoothly it ran. Yuval is very flexible in his leadership. He has a strong artistic vision and is great at communicating that vision, but does it in a very freeing way.”

Sharon said it made sense to base the production in the Arts District, a community that he noted is growing and finding its identity. It serves as a perfect anchor for *Hopscotch* thanks to the nearby communities, he said.

“We did a five-mile radius and wondered what streetscapes and landscapes and vistas would be available,” Sharon said. “Within 10 minutes you traverse so many worlds: the Historic Core, Boyle Heights, Chinatown, Elysian Park, the area northeast of Downtown, and all the neighborhoods in between that don’t have names.”

The act of traveling through that landscape melds with a key metaphor in the opera, when Lucha hears from a fortune-teller. “A thousand streets lead into one great road, and no gate blocks your way,” the seer says.

Hopscotch acknowledges that driving in Los Angeles can be a lonely, isolated experience, Sharon said, but it also affirms that everyone is connected by the roads that stretch across the city, whether they like it or not.

Hopscotch runs through Nov. 15 at 350 Merrick St. or hopscotchopera.com.

Link: http://www.ladowntownnews.com/arts_and_entertainment/the-opera-of-the-open-road/article_8cdf120-7c0a-11e5-befd-43a889e74562.html



November 9, 2015

A Hip-Hop Carnival, a Car Opera and the Art Walk Fill Downtown

By *LA Downtown News*

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - In this week's Don't Miss List: A Hip-Hop Carnival, a Car Opera and the Art Walk Fill Downtown



1. Los Angeles hip-hop maestro Tyler, the Creator is the irreverent, grotesque and potent MC that this city neither deserved nor expected. Intertwined with psychedelia, humor and a total disregard for a properly groomed image, the self-proclaimed goblin from Ladera Heights proudly presents his vision of L.A. hip-hop on Saturday, Nov. 14, as the grounds around the L.A. Coliseum hosts the fourth annual Camp Flog Gnaw Carnival. The festival in Exposition Park features an all-star lineup of bizarre and heavy acts including the ever-demure Tokimonsta, YG, Flosstradamus, Atmosphere, A\$AP Rocky, Mac Miller, Snoop Dogg and a special performance from Tyler's own reformed crew OFWGKTA. Doors open at 2 p.m. At 3911 S. Figueroa St., (213) 747-7111 or campfloggnaw.com.



2. The galleries of the Central City yet again open their doors to throngs of visitors as the Downtown Art Walk returns on Thursday, Nov. 12. Down at the GDCA Gallery at 727 S. Spring St., Bill Sherwood's Chasing Momentum highlights the artist's fascinating study of light through reverse Plexiglass paintings. Over in Santee Court, the Ren Gallery celebrates its recent move from the corner of Sixth and Los Angeles streets. Elsewhere, the Imperial Gallery at 683 S. Santa Fe Ave. hosts the group show Dyslexia! Other surprises await the curious and intrepid. In the Historic Core or downtownartwalk.org.



3. Brimming with tasty waves and a coastline carved with ample berths for the yachting set, the Pacific Ocean is a great marine backyard that lends California recreational opportunities and an important sense of identity. Enter Simon Winchester. The historically obsessed author's latest work attempts to put the vastness of the Pacific in context with its past, present and future. On Tuesday, Nov. 10, at 7:15 p.m., the Aloud series at the Central Library hosts Winchester for a discussion of a book with the intriguing sub-title From Silicon Chips and Surfboards to Brutal Dictators and Fading Empires. Admission is free but online reservations are recommended. At 630 W. Fifth St., (213) 228-7500 or lfla.org.



4. The brilliant minds that converted Union Station into a venue for immersive opera have returned to transform Downtown geography and Southern California car culture into a mobile journey wrought in creative fusion. The Industry's Hopscotch, now in its final week, invites guests to select one of three routes on which the work of six composers and a bounty of creative interlopers interlock to form a multi-car aria exploration. Better still, those without the cash are invited to SCI-Arc, where the whole shebang is celebrated and video-streamed at a site temporarily named "The Hub." Hopscotch features 10:45 a.m., 12:45 and 2:45 p.m. show times on both Saturday and Sunday. At hopscotchopera.com.



5. Enamored with poet George Crabbe's portrayal of the secrets hidden amidst an ordinary English village, composer Benjamin Britten honed in on the narrative of a lonely fisherman, Peter Grimes, as the subject of his now famous opera. On Friday, Nov. 13, at 8 p.m., the Los Angeles Philharmonic takes the stage at Walt Disney Concert Hall to dissect "Four Sea Interludes and Passacaglia" from Peter Grimes with video accompaniment from visual artist Tal Rosner. Guest composer Ludovic Morlot (shown here)

from the Seattle Symphony takes the baton to lead the gang through the Britten piece and the robust Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61 from Beethoven. At 111 S. Grand Ave., (213) 972-7300 or laphil.com.

Link: http://www.ladowntownnews.com/arts_and_entertainment/a-hip-hop-carnival-a-car-opera-and-the-art/article_76032d58-84cc-11e5-976e-03f2c5f2849d.html

LA Observed

October 30, 2015

'Hopscotch' is a mobile opera of LA culture

By Iris Schneider



Yuval Sharon in black shirt. Below are performers in the opera. Photos by Iris Schneider.

When you or I think about the wonderful diversity of Los Angeles, the alienation of our car culture, the things we think about in solitude, the healing power of love, the muses that inspire us, the musical threads that run through our lives and the serendipity of happenstance, it might be difficult to figure out how all those random concepts might come together. But you and I are not Yuval Sharon.

Sharon thinks that all those things can indeed fall into one category: opera. And for those of us who've never quite understood opera, don't worry. Turns out you can enjoy "Hopscotch," Sharon's latest mobile opera, which takes place in cars driving across Los Angeles, without really ever fully understanding it.

"Our aim is to shift the operatic paradigm," says Sharon. "We hope that in our isolated cars, maybe, hopefully, there is some place where we can all connect. 'Hopscotch' changes the nature of opera and the nature of the spectator and the artist to create a transformed view of our everyday life. The logistics and the art-making meet in something that we hope is very harmonious."

The third opera completed through Sharon's young company called The Industry, "Hopscotch" was pulled together by an impressive array of artists, city bureaucrats, technical support, limousine drivers and community members to create a performance that is part meditation and part mystery. The only certainty is that the piece defies description. I went along for the ride, literally, and was left perplexed and transported -- no pun intended -- in equal measure.

With an ambitious and sweeping production that brings Christo to mind in its scope and bureaucratic challenges, Sharon and his merry band of artists and technocrats take each audience member on one of three totally different rides through Los Angeles via a series of limousines that transport not only the viewer but the performers. At various times on my 90-minute and 5-limousine journey I was serenaded by a troubled woman, a cellist and a handsome reader, a male and then female duo of mariachi musicians, a beat-boxing harpist, a soulful *cancionera* and a beautiful young woman dressed for her *quinceanera* who sang to us then stopped at Mariachi Plaza to borrow a book from Libros Schmibros. Needless to say, the real mariachis waiting for work in the plaza were left to wonder just what was going on as our group of four followed in her footsteps, and another set of listeners wandered the plaza wearing Sennheiser headphones that were piping in their particular piece of the story. To be honest, I was wondering too.

But once I let go of the need to know, I was struck by the uniqueness of the experience and the pleasure it brought me. The piece is a celebration of Los Angeles, as the cars thread their way through the three different routes, all within a 5-mile radius of the SciArc parking lot where the piece ends at the "Central Hub." Part of the fun is seeing the LA backdrop roll by out the car window as the scenes unfold. This aspect is central to Sharon's idea that the three main characters in the piece are Lucha, LA and the audience member. And each viewer's experience will be theirs alone.

Our journey, the Red Route, took in 8 of the 24 chapters, and began at the Breed St. Shul, stopped at the the Toy Factory lofts for a rooftop musical interlude, Hollenbeck Park, Mariachi Plaza, Evergreen Cemetery and finally the SciArc parking lot. The ending culminated within that wooden structure of the Central Hub, resembling a bullring, but it became the place where all facets of the main character Lucha's life finally came together as the whole ensemble

circled and repeated snippets of their operatic arias. Eventually, the action came to an end, and perhaps not knowing what else to do, the audience erupted in applause. Sharon hopes that if you are curious enough about the linear storyline, you will visit the website or read through your program to learn about it. If not, Sharon encouraged the audience to think of the piece as 24 10-minute operas loosely based on "Orpheus and Eurydice."

In describing their goals, music director Mark Lowenstein said "It is unusual to think of this as an opera because the composer is not in the driver's seat. It is a communal production with different voices swirling together...a kaleidoscopic mosaic, telling the story of one person's life."

Sharon paraphrased a helpful quote from Kierkegaard to help understand the project: "Life can be understood looking backwards. Unfortunately, it must be lived looking forward."

The production runs weekends from October 31-November 13. In addition to the live performances, the animated versions of the show can be accessed thorough **HopscotchOpera.com**, and video of all the chapters is available and open to the public for free as space permits at the SciArc site of the **Central Hub**.



Link: <http://www.laobserved.com/intell/2015/10/hopscotch.php>

LA Observed

November 21, 2015

Mature postmodern metropolis seeks long-term relationship

By Jon Christensen

Los Angeles has been dining out on its postmodern myth of itself for too long, it seems. The city is like an aging intellectual hipster whose love of the ineffable fragmentary nature of the decentered urban experience has gotten old. We're looking for a steady long-term relationship now, a story we can believe in.

Maybe it's just me, but I don't think so. I think this is the secret message at the heart of three very different works--an opera, a memoir, and an economic history--that have struck a strangely similar and resonant chord in Los Angeles this fall.



This came home to me while watching "Hopscotch," the drive-by opera, which closed this weekend after taking the city by storm over the past month. Underneath all of the very cool postmodern tricks--the opera is broken into 36 chapters scattered around different locations, which the audience experiences only in pieces, while traveling on three different routes through the city--"Hopscotch" is a good old-fashioned love story with a happy ending. There was something oddly touching--and maybe oddly touched, too--about driving downtown to put on headphones to watch people driving around the city in search of what: meaning, love, relationships, a story, all of the above? Yes, all of the above.

I wasn't surprised to find an essay by David Ulin, the LA Times book critic, in *Hopscotch: The Mobile Opera*, which is something of a cross between a long program and a short book for sale at "the central

hub" in the Arts District, where audience members could watch the opera unfold on video screens if, like me, they were unable to snag a ticket to ride along. Ulin takes a somewhat similar journey, on a smaller scale, and on foot, in his new memoir *Sidewalking: Coming to Terms with Los Angeles*.

Ulin's book is also composed of different routes through the city--mostly the mid-Wilshire neighborhood, but sometimes farther afield--that don't necessarily, on the surface anyway, add up. And Ulin explicitly doesn't seem to care if they add up. That they don't add up is, in fact, an important part of his experience of Los Angeles. And, yet, there is in his perambulations, too, a palpable craving for meaning, love, relationships, a story to believe in.

"We each create our own Los Angeles," Ulin said in a recent conversation about *Sidewalking* and "the future of the urban experience in Los Angeles" sponsored by the Ruskin Art Club, LA's oldest cultural institution. "There is no master narrative," he said. "We're all forced to take it and make it our own."

And, yet, Ulin sees the possibility of a common urban experience and relationships emerging in Los Angeles, and at the Grove, of all places--the popular shopping complex that masquerades as a Main Street urban village in the mid-Wilshire area, a postmodern trick in its own way. Ulin said the Grove is cultivating a new kind of pedestrian experience in Los Angeles, even if most people do drive there. The Grove, he asserted, may be inauthentic, but it is "an inauthentic space in which authentic interactions can happen."

Relationships are also at the center of *The Rise and Fall of Urban Economies: Lessons from San Francisco and Los Angeles*, an economic history written by Michael Storper and colleagues. I wrote about their book previously here. If I were to boil down to one sentence their analysis of why the San Francisco Bay Area won the new tech economy and LA did not, it would be this: Relationships matter.

Storper was part of the so-called "LA School," a loose group of urban scholars who argued that Los Angeles represented a new kind of postmodern, decentered, fragmented metropolis that required a new kind of postmodern urban theory. Postmodern Los Angeles emerged from the deindustrialization and decentralization that started around the 1970s and has defined the metropolitan region ever since, though there are signs everywhere that a new vision of the city may be emerging.

It's telling that an age-old question is now crying out at the heart of this new city struggling to emerge from the postmodern metropolis: How can we cultivate relationships?

Link: http://www.laobserved.com/intell/2015/11/mature_postmodern_metropolis_s.php

LAObserved

December 18, 2015

20 highlights of LA theater in 2015

By Don Shirley

Let's begin my discussion of the theatrical highlights of 2015 with...Center Theatre Group?

Yes, that's the same CTG, aka "L.A.'s Theatre Company," that I frequently chide for its dearth of productions set in LA, or plays by LA writers. No, as far as I know, CTG's artistic director Michael Ritchie hasn't suddenly decided to commit to producing at least one LA-set and LA-written play in each of his three theaters each season - but that would be an ideal New Year's resolution for him to consider.

What I'm commending here is CTG's current, final-inning programming at the Music Center: "The Christians" at the Mark Taper Forum and "The Bridges of Madison County" at the Ahmanson.

We might as well start with them, because not only are they among my favorite productions of 2015 but they're two out of only three productions on the list that readers can still see. The others have already closed.

If you assume that a play titled "The Christians" that's presented in December must be Christmas-oriented, you are mistaken. But if you assume that such a play on a CTG stage must be a snide attack on the title characters, you are also mistaken.

The title might be too ambitious. Christians are much more diverse than the play indicates. But playwright Lucas Hnath and director Les Waters (whose Actors Theatre of Louisville produced the play's premiere, with many of the same actors) are here not to sneer, but to provoke thought.

The production is designed as a service at a Protestant mega-church, complete with choir. The popular pastor (Andrew Garman) has a shocking message to deliver - he no longer believes in hell. But could that disbelief dissolve the believers' incentive to do the right thing? Could it dissolve the congregation itself?

The play is not restricted to one particular church service, as it investigates the aftermath of the minister's change of heart. But it retains the basic design, in which the characters stay inside that sanctuary with no set or costume changes.

In a venue where microphones are a must-have for public discussions, the characters continue to use them even in their private conversations with each other. The microphones make the pauses even more pregnant, and the minister's manipulation of the microphone cord becomes a visual metaphor of his attempts to artfully avoid the entanglements that his announcement precipitates. "The Christians" is one of the least predictable plays offered by CTG in years.

Looking at the title and the provenance of its next-door neighbor, "The Bridges of Madison County," you might assume that it's one of the most predictable of CTG offerings. Again, you would be mistaken.

Of course, it's based on the slender but massively popular romance novel that also inspired a Hollywood movie. But it adds Jason Robert Brown's versatile and vivid Tony-winning score, his personal conducting of the orchestra in LA, Marsha Norman's artful enlargement of the narrative dimensions, and lustrous stars (Elizabeth Stanley, Andrew Samonsky) under the masterful direction of Bartlett Sher. "Bridges of Madison County" becomes as essential for musical theater aficionados as the Golden Gate is for travelers to San Francisco.

That's more than I can say about the other current Broadway musical import, "If/Then" at the Pantages. However, if you're drawn to cluttered, confusing narratives with mostly generic music until the second act, then you might prefer "If/Then."

Besides "Christians" and "Madison County," the only other show on my list of 2015 highlights that's still playing is the Troubadour Theater's revival of "Santa Claus is

Comin' to Motown" at the Falcon Theatre in Burbank. Director Matt Walker plays the title role instead of the narrator, which he played in 2004 (the narrator is now played by the irrepressible Rick Batalla). Walker and company make sure to add 2015 jokes to this irresistible comic confection. Troubies shows are usually hot tickets, so if this one is on your Christmas wish list, you'd better not cry, you'd better not pout. Instead, take action.

And now, in alphabetical order, my complete list of 2015 highlights, representing the most talented tenth of the 200-plus shows I saw:

August: Osage County at Theatricum Botanicum. Tracy Letts' script came alive in Mary Jo DuPrey's staging in a way that it didn't in its earlier LA premiere at the Ahmanson, perhaps because four members of the Geer clan (plus the fiery Susan Angelo) were playing the roles of the related women.

Bad Jews at Geffen Playhouse. Joshua Harmon set an observant millennial against one of her non-observant cousins, with a family heirloom at stake, in the fiercest and funniest family fracas of the year.

The Bridges of Madison County. See above.

Carrie, the musical, first at La Mirada Theatre, then at Los Angeles Theatre in downtown LA. Director Brady Schwind turned this Gore/Pitchford musicalization of Stephen King's teen thriller into the year's best amusement park ride.

Chinglish from East West Players. Jeff Liu staged this sly, intricate comedy about cross-cultural misunderstandings in commerce and romance in the venue named after its writer, David Henry Hwang, who responded by introducing a slightly revised ending for the production's recent extension. See also "Enron" (below).

The Christians. See above.

Cineastas, at REDCAT. The inventive Argentine director Mariano Pensotti explored the lives of four filmmakers on one level of the stage and re-created scenes from their films on an upper level, noting the ways in which the characters and their artistic creations influence each other.

End of the Rainbow at International City Theatre. Gigi Bermingham depicted end-stage Judy Garland as an especially desperate cyclone in John Henry Davis' revival of Peter Quilter's musical drama.

Enron, from the Production Company at the Lex. Lucy Prebble's satirical and magically realistic dramatization of the corporate scandal finally reached LA in August Viverito's dynamic staging. Too bad it wasn't running at the same time as "Chinglish" (above), in which Chinese bureaucrats are duly impressed by an American's previous employment by the world-famous Enron.

Fences at International City Theatre. Michael Shepperd mastered every facet of the complex Troy Maxson in Gregg T. Daniel's vigorous revival of August Wilson's play (later, Shepperd went on to shine in the comedy vignettes within "Bootycandy" at his home company, the Celebration).

Hopscotch, from The Industry at many sites around LA. I didn't see even half of this massive three-track, site-specific "opera," much of which took place in cars driven down public streets. But I experienced one of the three tracks and separately witnessed a few of the other scenes in public places. I saw two scenes that involved no singing at all (one of these was a conversation between Cornerstone Theater actor Peter Howard in a moving limo and a motorcyclist in the next lane). So the theater world should not let visionary director Yuval Sharon's "opera" roots serve as a distraction from welcoming him into the related but hardly synonymous "theater" arena ASAP.

Julius Caesar, at A Noise Within. Directors Julia Rodriguez-Elliott and Geoff Elliott shot Shakespeare's political epic forward with uncommon speed and power. It was part of a repertory in which "The Threepenny Opera" depicted conditions that were ripe for revolution while "Julius Caesar" displayed the results.

Luka's Room, at Rogue Machine. Rob Mersola's provocative San Fernando Valley-set comedy focused on a slacker who ventures down unexpected online roads. Narrative twists elevated the show's concerns. Joshua Bitton directed.

Man Covets Bird, at 24th Street Theatre. Finegan Kruckemeyer's parable about a young man, a bird and modern alienation was transformed by director Debbie Devine and Leeav Sofer into a simple but haunting musical, which could be appreciated by older children as well as adults.

Mojada, a Medea in Los Angeles, a Boston Court production at the Getty Villa. Medea became a seamstress who retreated to her East LA yard after a brutal cross-border passage. Luis Alfaro's script, staged by Jessica Kubzansky, was the most impressive adaptation and the best new LA-set play of 2015.

My Barking Dog, from Theatre @ Boston Court. Eric Coble's play about two loners and a coyote hooked me on its characters in realistic opening monologues and then ventured into truly dark and dangerous straits. The performances and every design component of Michael Michetti's staging were impeccable.

A Permanent Image, at Rogue Machine. Not just another alcohol-fueled family-reunion play, Samuel D. Hunter's entry in this genre touched on such larger arenas as assisted suicide and the Big Bang theory. John Perrin Flynn's staging, starring a golden cast and Nicholas Santiago's astonishing video, deserves a larger audience in a midsize theater.

Santa Claus Is Comin' to Motown. See above.

Spring Awakening, at the Wallis Annenberg Center in Beverly Hills. Deaf West's and Michael Arden's entrancing rendition of the musical, with its ASL-infused style, stopped at the Wallis on its way from Inner-City Arts to Broadway. The Wallis was an ideal home for it, offering big-time benefits while retaining a sense of intimacy and superb sight lines.

Vietgone, at South Coast Repertory. Qui Nguyen's interpretation of his parents' saga of their 1975 meeting in an Arkansas camp for Vietnamese refugees uses the lens of his own generation's perspective, with contemporary language and comic-book design. Director May Adrales expertly handled the best world premiere in greater LA in 2015. South Coast's overlapping revival of Beth Henley's "Abundance," staged by Martin Benson, made a fascinating companion piece.

Bombast threat

Am I some kind of terrorist? Should I ask the FBI to investigate me?

In my last column, I complimented the tone of unity that prevailed at the annual Ovation Awards ceremony, after a year in which the LA theater had been involved in internecine struggle over Actors' Equity's decision to end the current 99-seat plan.

And what was the reaction of Steven Leigh Morris, the pro-99 partisan who now runs LA Stage Alliance, which sponsors the Ovation Awards?

He compared me to the terrorists in Paris. And Mali. He probably would have included those in San Bernardino, but he was writing before they struck.

In his response on the Stage Raw website, which he founded, Steven (yes, we're on a first-name basis) didn't actually mention me in the same sentence as Paris and Mali. But after calling for unity in the face of such dire threats and invoking "the battle of Agincourt. The Battle of Britain," he introduced his fourth paragraph with these words:

"And this is as true culturally as it is politically. Don Shirley..."

If I may wade through the overkill to his main points, here they are:

He said I described the calls for unity that he and others made at the Ovations ceremony as "a step back from prior convictions." Actually, I said no such thing - unless he, using his wartime analogies, equates an "inclusive, unifying tone," as I characterized his Ovation-night remarks, with Neville Chamberlain-style appeasement (come to think of it, he did use that "Battle of Britain" analogy, in which case who exactly is the Hitler analogue?).

More important, he charges that "Don just wants those smaller theaters gone because they annoy him. He seems to think they're a waste of his time, and ergo, everybody else's."

I thought I made it clear in my column that I don't want the small companies to disappear. I'd prefer that they marshal their time and energy in order to grow into larger companies, with higher profiles, so that their best work is not so easy for the larger public to ignore. Apparently Steven didn't notice that later in the same column, I praised a production at a small theater (see "Man Covets Bird," above), adding that I hoped it would find a second home and a longer life at a larger theater (see "Spring Awakening," above).

Steven also failed to acknowledge that Equity itself, by changing its initial plan, made sure that the 99-seat membership companies - run by the actors themselves - can more or less keep doing what they're doing now, without any interference from or supervision by Equity.

In fairness to Stage Raw, I should note that it ran another column, by Paul Birchall, that also disagreed with my position and even also mentioned the Paris attacks in its introduction, but which scrupulously avoided suggesting that I might have Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi on speed dial.

Steven, however, argued in his conclusion that I'm "on the side of outside factions who enter a community wielding bricks and pipes and firebombs." Yikes! I hope he doesn't tell the Sierra Club, with whom I frequently hike - they'll call the police if I show up with my backpack.

Link: http://www.laobserved.com/intell/2015/12/20_highlights_of_la_theater_in.php

STONES IN THE COLOR OF RARE

November 1, 2015

Sennheiser and Artistic Director Yuval Sharon Take HOPSCOTCH from the Sidewalks to a Sound Filled Experience of 36 Chapters of Opera

By ankhente

We can all relate to in one way or another, the process that goes along with, playing outside in the local community. Usually, after school we would change from our nice school clothes to our go outside and play clothes. Playing involved some sort of interaction with the neighbor's kids, next of kin or oneself. For some there were rocks and marbles available for chunking at bullies, Jax and HOPSCOTCH.



On October 31st, "The Industry's "Hopscotch the Opera" opens to the general public.

Now just imagine the concept of HOPSCOTCH applied to a living breathing and moving expression called, Opera. Imagine your friend in an intriguing story carefully designed by a group of six LA based composers and six LA-based writers, at the height of their artistic prowess. Not there yet, kick back and lean forward, hear that, those sweet and magnificent textured layers of ear-resistible waves brought to you by the wizards of sound, Sennheiser. The evening's entertainment produced by an eclectic group of artist and creators highly intuitive and distinctive Sharon's, elegant



motivated by their artistic director, Yuval adaptation.

Hopscotch involves jumping horizontal to vertical from one drawn out chalked square to another, while picking up an object. Each object placed very carefully in each square until you hit the number 10, or the final square. The more numbers, the more squares that one had to overcome on the way to getting to the final square at the end of the block. Jumping the squares was the big feat, and staying within the confines of the squares whilst trying to reach the opposite square was the highlight and what all hopped for.



The Industry's, HOPSCOTCH, anti-ups the game in its impeccable dictation of self; and how that self relates to others in closed quarters and, with20151025_163350 (576x1024) strangers. Destination unknown. Three individual routes painted out in Yellow, Green, and Red. Hopscotch uses a 36 Chapter composed Opera, giving each route, 8 Chapters of the 36. It takes approximately 90 Minutes for the complete Opera to play out, with each chapter lasting 10 minutes in each car seating a group of four. Each performer (s) assigned one Chapter giving them the opportunity to breathe life into each Chapter. The audience gets to enjoy the ride whilst changing cars and going to different destinations. The entire process of Chapters rotates eight times. In this way participants can enjoy a full 36 Chapters, no matter what stage on the counter or counter-clockwise rotated cycle, they departed from. Ten narratives of carefully selected short animated chapters are accessible at any time throughout the production. The chapters are viewable at HopscotchOpera.com



Partnered with the emerging technology of Sennheiser's newest, tech Gizmodo, the AVX systems and hidden microphones were designed specifically and with much sensitivity using an ambient audio signal for sending back to the Central Hub. The Lavalier mic is securely planted behind a seat, in the enclosed ceiling of the limousine, a table's underside, or right next to the person sitting. This in turn establishes connection between a wireless AVX backpack transmitter that sends a signaled receiver that is a plugged into a Samsung S5 Smartphone /camera.



A live stream broadcast application at the Hub manages the remainder of the process by holding the A/V 20151025_160837 (872x1024) signal, which includes the Sennheiser digital, wireless audio. An interesting phenomenon is the use of Sennhieser 2000 G3 Series wireless system on the rooftops and trunks of the 24 mobile car excursion determining a clear, clean, and crisp sound for participants and talent during the ride throughout the downtown Los Angeles area.



A technical milestone happened with the use of, The Industry and Sennheiser's six-layered channel EM 2050 receiver and a four-channel SR 2050 IEM wireless transmitter to enclose the wide screen sound effect of sound on both the channels and live voices to create a perfectly comfortable 90-minute performance. To insure the best quality of sound three of the limousines that used the 2000 G3 Series, had Sennheiser's, A 1031 U Passive Omni-directional antennae mounted to the limousines roof for a flawless two-way audio transmission between production staff and moving vehicles.



At the Central Hub with the aid of the Guideport and Momentum headphones by Sennheiser, the hub bustled with interested onlookers and performers. An HDMI set up as a receptor there routing each of the 24 A/V signals to the appropriate large LED screen monitor. Audiences are able to hear audio output for each monitor from the Sennheiser Guide port system, which widely broadcast each individual audio signal to 24 channels. Each participant received a Guide Post receiver and Keypad bringing the wonderful sounds of the corresponding numbered channels directly to their ears. All enjoyed a perfect evening at the Hopscotch Opera within the lovely confines of the Sennheiser, AVX-20151025_160708digital, wireless system. Bexel Audio Specialist supplied additional audio and sound support to the Central Hub.



A media boost held inside SCI-Arc (Southern California Institute of Architecture) drew members of the press from far and wide. The boost gave the media direct access to HOPSCOTCH's crew, affectionally known as, "The Industry."



Founded by Artistic Director, Yuval Sharon, "The Industry" presented a Q&A featuring, HOPSCOTCH creators, Executive Director, Elizabeth Cline, Music Supervisor and Composer, Mark Lowenstein, Commercial Management of Broadcast of Media, Sennheiser's, Achim Gleissner and SCI-Arc (Southern California Institute Sennheiser HOPSCOTCH Yuval Sharon 101 Director, Hernan Diaz Alonso.



Each member of the panel explained the technical aspects and the mechanical components of, Hopscotch and expressed their heartfelt enjoyment in participating and bringing the Opera to life. Achim of Sennheiser talked up his first meeting Yuval during their Union Station resident production, "Invisible Cities." "We loved the idea and decided to discuss how HOPSCOTCH could happen, not why it couldn't happen." Neil Shaw of Menlo Scientific Acoustics was on hand to lend his support and technical advice for the event.



Invited guests and media were treated to refreshments, and the coolest keep sakes, like Sennheiser HOPSCOTCH Yuval Sharon 077 (683x1024) the designed SCI-arc and Hopscotch handbooks as well as a special treat of the latest Sennheiser powered Momentum In-ear Headphones.



Fans of, The Industry and Sennheiser says Executive Director, Elizabeth Cline can look forward to an LA Philharmonic Sennheiser HOPSCOTCH Yuval Sharon 086 (783x1024) residency in 2016 and the planning of core programs for 2017 and into the future. A group shot of the entire HOPSCOTCH the Opera production team included the six LA-based composers, headed by musical director and composer, Mark Lowenstein, Andrew McIntosh, Veronika Krausas, Andrew Norman, David Rosenboom and Ellen Reid;

and the six LA-based writers are, Tom Jacobsen, Mandy Kahn, Sarah La Brie, Jane Stephens Rosenthal, Janine Salinas Schoenberg and Erin Young.

Our last words, if you plan to Hopscotch be prepared mentally, physically and spiritually to go where no Opera has ever gone before.

Now let's begin, one, two, pick up your shoe, three. four, out on the floor, five, six, pick up sticks, seven, eight, lay them straight, nine, ten, let the hopping begin.

Link: <http://ankhentertainmentone.net/2015/11/3936/>

24700

October 2, 2015

The Industry's Hopscotch Takes Opera On the Road

By Soleil David

After the success of The Industry's *Invisible Cities*, a 2013 site-specific work which staged Italo Calvino's eponymous 1972 novel at the iconic Los Angeles Union Station, the experimental opera company takes their new production to where a lot of Angelenos spend their time: in traffic.

In *Hopscotch*, audience members ride in one of 24 cars and meet Lucha, Jameson and Orlando, three individuals who meet and grow old in Los Angeles, in a story loosely based on the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Three routes have been planned for *Hopscotch*, each with their own self-contained, but interconnected, narrative.

The riders in *Hopscotch* have no idea where they are going and could find themselves driving around with musicians and actors, and watching key points of the story unfold at certain intersections and sidewalks throughout the city.

The opera is filmed live and may be watched at a 180-person Central Hub in the parking lot of Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc). Twenty-four screens will simultaneously stream the opera and each audience member may focus on any of the streams using the German audio company Sennheiser's Momentum headphones and innovative Guideport technology.

Beyond the music and the story, Yuval Sharon, The Industry's artistic director, wants *Hopscotch* to also be about how Angelenos see their city. "Sometimes it's about the car, sometimes it's about the journey," he says in a *Los Angeles Times* article. "It's about how to go beyond the isolation of individual car rides and about noticing our city streets as we shuttle to our destinations."

Numerous CalArtians are involved in the ambitious production. Among the team of Los Angeles-based composers are alumni Andrew McIntosh (Music MFA 08) and Ellen Reid (Music MFA 11) and faculty Marc Lowenstein and dean of The Herb Alpert School of Music at CalArts David Rosenboom. Among the actors featured are faculty Timur Bekbosunov (Music MFA 08) and Paul Berkolds and alumna Odeya Nini (Music MFA 11).

Additionally, The Industry has partnered with Los Angeles animators to animate some of the chapters in the *Hopscotch* story, one of which is the featured video above. Ticket buyers also receive *Hopscotch* the book, which contains excerpts and synopses from the full opera, art, an interview with Sharon and an essay by David Ulin, The *Los Angeles Times*' book critic.

Previews for *Hopscotch* start this Sunday (Oct. 4), with regular performances starting on the weekends of Oct. 31 through Nov. 15. Three performances are scheduled per day.

Below is the first part of a two-part series about “How to *Hopscotch*.”

Read more about *Hopscotch* in this article from *California Sunday Magazine*.

Link: <http://blog.calarts.edu/2015/10/02/the-industrys-hopscotch-takes-opera-on-the-road/>



October 30, 2015

IN YOUR LANE

"Hopscotch" is a new opera performed in over 24 moving cars

BY ADAM POPESCU

No other city could birth this brilliant madness. An opera, performed in simultaneous harmony in 24 stretch limos, Lincoln town cars, Jeeps, and motorcycles. Winding through the concrete backstreets of Downtown Los Angeles, creeping along the L.A. River, through the pagodas of Chinatown, and back into the Arts District for its denouement.

This is [Hopscotch](#), the world's first mobile opera.

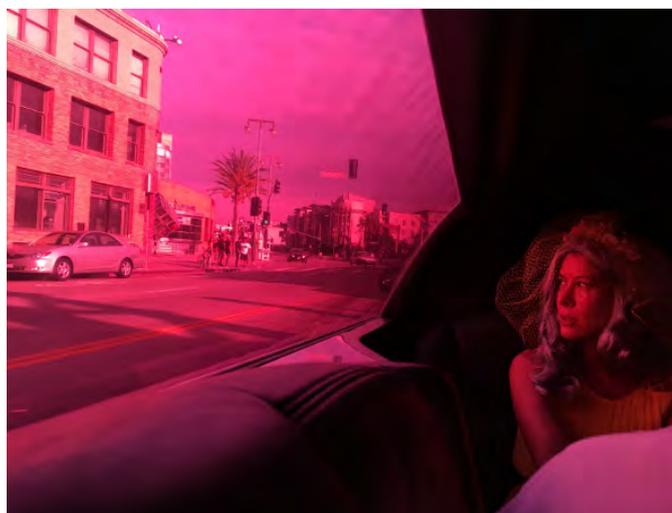
There's a reason it's a first.

Three routes, each divided into 10 minute chapters, performed in two dozen vehicles and locations, a cast and crew hovering into triple figures, the production is staggering in scope.

With so many moving pieces, precise timing and staging needed, a lot can go wrong.

Forget mezzos singing off-key or saxophonists missing notes, there's L.A itself to contend with.

Falsettos competing against the shriek of car horns, crooning over the low hiss of air-conditioning. Unforgiving traffic, baffled locals who have no idea what's driving by, more baffled when occupants spill out and perform flash-mob style.



Most of all, in this age of social media short attention, there's a finicky audience to face.

Like many dramas, *Hopscotch* is the story of love and love lost.

But that's where similarity departs.

Chapters are presented in non-chronological order, so no route contains the whole show, and each piece stands alone.

Where you're going is a secret until you get there—you won't even know where to meet until a few days before the show.

This was intended to increase attendees' excitement.

There are only four audience members per group.

Filming and photography are frowned upon in such tight quarters, however each leg of the performance is livestreamed for a larger audience online. The whole idea is to be *in* the moment, and you are in the moment, and very much part of it happening.

With back seats pulsating with LED strip lights, the venue feels more like a party bus than performance space. Yet it's this intimate and unexpected pairing that makes this all feel so special. Because what's happening outside the cars' windows is just as interesting as what's happening inside.

I spent two hours hopping in and out of this event. There's a tension that makes *Hopscotch* both so unusual and inviting.

"Strange how we go about our lives, like locked cars with the windows up," an actor mused at one point, in between quoting T.S. Elliot and Faust.

He's right.

In Los Angeles, it is driving that connects us, which is a stream of consciousness theme that runs throughout *Hopscotch*. The city itself is a lead player in this opera, just as much as the actors and musicians.

Where else could a soprano in a lucha libre mask sing with a quartet of nymphs, and a full band backing? On the edge of the L.A. River, a performer chants out of an open Jeep as puzzled fishermen look on. Dancers gyrate over train tracks.

Somehow, it doesn't seem crazy—the city is a stage—and only in L.A. could this cultural hodgepodge work.

"What makes it an adventure is that artists from all different disciplines come together in a way that's highly unstable and highly unpredictable," explained Yuval Sharon, *Hopscotch's* director, and the artistic director of The Industry, the Los Angeles company that spent two and a half years planning with six composers, six writers, and more than 120 artists to bring the opera to life.

When Sharon started the company five years ago, he hoped to expand the definition of modern opera. With the help of a diverse team, he stumbled on a formula mixing narrative and technology to create transportive art where audiences don't quite know where they're going.

“The idea was in our isolated cars, driving all over Los Angeles, maybe, hopefully, there’s some place where we all connect,” he continued, calling the project a bridge between spectator and artist.

“Each audience member is experiencing the story in a completely unique way, in a random set of chapters, and what they experience is the city going by, and this music as a way to augment our experience of the city.”

Los Angeles poet and writer Mandy Kahn, one of *Hopscotch*’s half dozen scribes, had tears in her eyes during the final chapter, watching real-life breath blown into her characters for the first time.

“It’s overwhelming,” Kahn said. “As writers we had total creative freedom. We pitched crazy ideas, we wrote the scenes not knowing necessarily if they would be realized the way we imagined them, but we were told to dream as big as possible.”

Kahn says the city where she was born was in many ways her muse. L.A. has more working artists living here than any city in the country—14% according to the [LA 2050 report](#)—and more creative organizations per capita than any other city in the country. The best performers come here, the best writers, the best chefs, the best creators.

It’s a common comment from transplants from other places is that L.A. isn’t a city. There’s no center, no culture, no soul. They couldn’t be more wrong.

The reality of L.A.’s beating heart is seen everywhere and nowhere, and that’s because too often we’re busy behind the wheel, too busy staring straight ahead to watch the life playing out outside of our cars.

If *Hopscotch* succeeds in anything, it re-connects us to the world outside of our window. And it’s a big world to see. And one worth watching.

—

Photo: Cast members of Hopscotch. Credit: Hopscotch.

Photo: Cast member of Hopscotch riding in limo. Credit: Sound and Vision.

Link: <http://smashd.co/in-your-lane/>



October 8, 2015

Yuval Sharon shows us the chalk behind 'Hopscotch'

By Lauri D. Goldenhersh

It's being hailed as "the asphalt opera", and is certainly one of the most original theatrical conceptions of our time. Carefully orchestrated in 24 cars tooling around Los Angeles, plus a central hub where visitors can get the video-driven big picture, Hopscotch is in previews now, and is one of the hottest tickets in town. (If you don't have your tix yet, get on it!)



We managed to talk The Industry's artistic director and lead idea guy **Yuval Sharon** (pictured left) into a little e-interview amid all the production fuss, and he shares with us some behind-the-scenes deets about what it takes to take a maverick idea and make it a reality:

Where did the idea come from?

Six months before *Invisible Cities* opened, I was working with Jason H. Thompson, Hopscotch's Production Designer, on a production of *Cunning Little Vixen* with the Cleveland Orchestra. We had the afternoon free and wandered over to the beautiful art museum there. As we were sitting in the atrium, we started thinking about what would be the next great artistic challenge after *Invisible Cities*. So we started thinking about cars and how much our perspective of our city and ourselves is defined by the experience of driving in a car. *What would happen if we could transform that view of the city by turning a car ride into a performative act?* Within an hour, we jotted down on a napkin the core mechanism of what would become *Hopscotch* — a series of isolated car rides throughout the city that find their way back to a central point. In the course of the two-and-a-half years between then and now, the project has evolved and taken on deep philosophical layers for all of us connected to the work. But the general construct has stayed exactly the same.

Is Hopscotch linked to plot, or it more of an experiential piece?

The idea of "experience as narrative" is something I have really wrestled with, ever since starting The Industry. I don't believe a rich theatrical performance can be only about experience — and yet the disorientation of an unusual experience offers dimensions and layers that have great, unpredictable depth. I knew that for Hopscotch to be more than just a fun ride, we would have to create something

where the sum of the parts is greater than the individual elements. Here is where narrative became essential for the project.

The real experiment of Hopscotch for me is ultimately a narrative one. There is one master story, dispersed geographically on three distinct routes. They all tell one story but in a highly disjointed way — every moment of the story needs to serve as a port of departure for the audience. **The ten most expositional chapters are available to everyone online as animated chapters** [see Chapter 10 below]— we are releasing them two at a time every week until Opening on October 31. I am excited to see how audiences piece it all together.

Do you anticipate that most people will try to do more than one route or option, or that they'll pick one and go with it?

I'm trying to create a piece where just seeing one route will feel like a complete experience. Each route has a piece by each of the six composers; each one includes visits to "secret sites"; and there are several other elements that make it impossible to decide on a "best route." I can imagine people will want to see more than one route, and it would be great if they do — but there is always the Central Hub, where everyone can experience all of the pieces for free. I imagine most people will buy a ticket to one route and then come to the Central Hub to see what happens on the other routes.

One of the things I really love about how this experience starts for the audience is a blind choice: you are asked to choose between RED, YELLOW, and GREEN, without knowing anything about what distinguishes one route from the other. It's a leap into the unknown — and it's the beginning of letting go of control that is really essential to this experience. (For those trying to see an individual singer or performer, our website lists exactly who is performing on which route.) Audiences will only find out their Departure Point, where they are starting — they won't see the map their drivers will take, nor the sites they will be visiting. I hope it helps the audience begin the process of looking at their city with fresh eyes, and influenced by this new music.

Would you consider this an ode to the automotive lifestyle, or a reaction to it? (i.e. how much do you love your car?)

It's not an ode for or against driving, but rather an investigation of the state of driving, how our inner and outer landscapes influence one another as we navigate the city. I'm more interested in exploring the way driving effects our perspective of our city and ourselves — and vice versa. Music is a perfect vessel for that exploration. Some scenes will feel exhilarating, the way that sometimes driving can feel so liberating; other scenes will remind you of how disconnected and isolated driving can make you feel. I think that if I had a particular message for or against cars, the piece could never stand a chance at artistic success.

One of the things The Industry has done very well is planning ahead, and it seems this production has been "in the works" for quite some time. How has that long-term thinking helped or hindered you as you develop a new project, and this one in particular?

A project like this is 99% logistical preparation and 1% actual execution — which might sound crazy, but I don't think that's too different from conventional opera. This project, like all opera, is all about the grace of a coordinated moment of time. Bringing so many individual forces into harmony is a major effort, but when it all aligns, the result is transformative.



Were there peculiar challenges putting this production together?

Every element of this production is a challenge, from the box office to the casting. We spent hours trying to figure out, chapter by chapter, where all the singers are going to get changed and where they will be told to park. What I didn't anticipate is how every interaction with our civic agencies has been inspiring, from the Department of Transportation, to the Mayor's Office, to the Department of Cultural Affairs, to the Department of Parks and Recreation, and more. There was such a spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm everywhere we turned for help for this project — it has made me so happy to be living in Los Angeles. I don't know any other city that has this much of an appetite for bold new ideas.

With six different composers, you've obviously tried to make sure each creator's work is included in each route. Did this factor show up earlier or later in the show's development? Are there additional considerations when you're working with multiple authors?

Different composers and writers was crucial to the experience from the very beginning. I wanted the audience to notice how, within a 10-minute car ride in Los Angeles, you traverse completely different worlds. Having such disparate musical voices is so important to the diversity of this project. I also love the challenge this presents our audience: they will have to constantly find their footing anew, each time they enter a car.

This has been an enormous experiment in collaborative creation. Through the development of the piece, there has been a constant and highly individual back-and-forth between me and each of the composers. I want the work to feel like an extension of their own interests and explorations, while also staying in line with the bigger picture. It was a back-and-forth of restriction and freedom — a tension I think of as essential to any creative enterprise.

What's next for The Industry?

We have a number of collaborations with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the works as part of my three-year residency there as an Artist-Collaborator. Those are going to be thrilling. Independently, our next project, for Fall 2016, is well underway...but we're saving the announcement for after Hopscotch. It will be big and exciting in a totally different way. I'm bad at keeping secrets so I will just stop right there...

(Finally, a couple of questions just for fun:)

If you got the chance to rename a street in LA, where would it be, and who or what would you name it after?

I wish there was a Schoenberg Street. Visiting his house in Brentwood was an incredible reminder of how much important musical history happened here in Los Angeles. It was part of what inspired me to move here.

When driving for extended periods, what do you do in the car to amuse yourself?

Although I'm a terrible singer I absolutely love singing along with music while I'm driving. It's so freeing, even though I'm sure the drivers next to me assume I'm a lunatic. Maybe that's why I think of the streets as such a great stage for music...

Epilogue

Many thanks to Yuval for his time, and to The Industry for continuing to reinvent one of our most beloved art forms. We look forward to seeing the end result of this monumental endeavor!

Link: <http://laurislist.net/blog/2015/10/yuval-sharon-shows-us-the-chalk-behind-hopscotch/>



November 1, 2015

Undressing Hopscotch: Costume Designers Reveal their Aesthetic Vision

By Corinne DeWitt



Ann Closs-Farley and Kate Bergh haven't eaten all day. The North Hollywood sun droops low as the two costume designers return from Olvera street. At Closs-Farley's front door, a schnauzer and a dachshund leap to greet them. They kick off their sandals, and Closs-Farley shakes out her pixie hair. Bergh sinks onto a wooden chair in the dining room. Sitting down for take-out Thai, they chit chat about the trickiness of wigs and spatted tennis shoes. In a few minutes, they'll head out again in search of 36 leather jackets.

Closs-Farley and Bergh were tapped to design the costumes for *Hopscotch*, Yuval Sharon's newest space-specific opera. Based on a loose fusion of Julio Cortazar's novel of the same name and the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, *Hopscotch* is a mobile opera, which means instead of playing on stage, the show takes place inside moving vehicles. The setting is hardly conventional, but experimental operas are the hallmark of Sharon and his company, The Industry.

In 2013, Sharon provoked Los Angeles with The Industry's operatic adaptation of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. The opera took place in Union Station; audience members and unsuspecting passersby watched awestruck as *Invisible Cities* characters Kublai Kahn and Marco Polo moved among commuters and audience members, distinguished by the headphones on their ears through which they listened to Christopher Cerrone's opera.

A feat, to be sure, but Sharon seeks a greater challenge with *Hopscotch*. The adventure unfolds in 24 limousines that stop at iconic LA locations including the Bradbury Building downtown, Angel's Point in

Elysian Park, and Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights. Performers and audience members share the intimate limo space as they drive, witnessing the musical story of protagonists Lucha, Jameson, and Orlando. As this moveable feast rolls through the Los Angeles streets, eventually converging at the Central Hub, a temporary home base at Sci-Arc, audience members reacquaint themselves with their city or, most commonly, see it for the first time.

At the first *Hopscotch* rehearsal, cast and crew, more than 120 strong, gathered to hear Sharon's vision for his production. Emphasizing collaboration, Sharon said,listen "This is a project that can inspire the people that think they don't even like opera, the people that have never been to an opera before, people that just think, 'I never thought something like this was possible.' And the only way its possible is with our communal effort as a team."

As Sharon spoke, Closs-Farley scribbled notes, crafting her design plan for costuming a cast that includes 22 Luchas and 17 Jamesons of different ages, body types, and ethnicities. The story is split into 36 distinct chapters, so to keep the narrative clear, she must consider, "what would keep the audience from thinking that [Lucha's] sister showed up, or her mother showed up, or someone related to Lucha, and how do we keep that with Lucha?"

When it's her turn to address the *Hopscotch* cast, Closs-Farley exclaims,listen "We only have a couple times to get it right. So I'm not gonna be fitting you very often, so its gonna be kind of magical. But that's what I do! I'm really good at getting to know people, and I'm scanning you like a computer. I'm like superhuman right now!"

Her infectious positivity and ability to maneuver what she calls a "kooky" budget for *Hopscotch* are surely reasons why Sharon chose her for the project. Sharon and Closs-Farley have shared a mutual respect for each other's work since he "came to town a couple years ago." She designed for Sharon's animated opera project, Cuning Little Vixens.

In the spirit of collaboration, Closs-Farley told the cast, "I brought on a partner because I just don't think that I can do this all by myself. Because there's one of me, and a lot of you."

Kate Bergh eagerly volunteered to sign on as co-designer.



Bergh (left) and Closs-Farley on *Hopscotch* opening day.

listen “I forced myself on her. That’s basically what it was. She was doing the show and I said ‘when is it?’ She told me, and I said, ‘I’ll come over and help you.’ That was it. It was crazy,” Bergh recounts, smiling sideways. She ruffles her feathery blonde hair gracefully, and adjusts her Homeboy Industries t-shirt.

The two women have been “shopping the show” all day. Pausing now to assess their obstacles, they perch like cats on Closs-Farley’s living room couch.

Closs-Farley muses, “Normally you go through a period where you get a script, and you dream about it. You see it in your head, and you have these ideas for the show— Kate’s been...trying to organize like, how do you make sense of it.”

listen “I think the more organized we are, which is creative in a way, the better its going to be,” Bergh says.

Uncurling her legs, Closs-Farley laughs and blows pink bangs from her eyes.

“This is different form of theatrical-when you put something in the street, especially in Los Angeles where everybody is spectacular... When Yuval told me about it at first, [I thought], ‘this is guerrilla theater; this is the stuff we used to do in the 90s.’ I’m considerably older, and I also want to know, well, that I could hack something guerilla style again. I mean, believe me this is kind of like a show you do in your 20s and you’re naive to the amount of work it is... At the same time, I think if we pull this thing off, it’s going to open the door to other people doing this sort of site specific work that LA deserves, because it does have such a vast amount of space to play in, and there is no reason why you can’t do theater anywhere here.listen”

Closs-Farley has always reveled in the mutineer climate of the Los Angeles art scene.

listen “When my husband and I were first married, we would go see concerts at the Greek, but we wouldn’t actually go into the Greek, we found out about this place where if you climb down from the observatory, its carved out in the mountain. You could see concerts for free, but then there’s a ton of people secretly sitting in these carved seats out of the mud.”



Ann Closs-Farley describes Hopscotch to daughter, Violet, at the Central Hub on opening day.

Closs-Farley and Bergh envision that the *Hopscotch* characters will look like ordinary Angelenos, but perhaps a little brighter.

listen “We chose the colors,” she says, “specifically for each character, such as Lucha (this is environmental as well), Lucha would be yellow as the sun, joy...it’s a color that holds its self present all day... Orlando is brown, of the earth. Jameson is black and white as if it is a distant, noir character... We have our musicians in blue, which are of the sky, and of the things that are very California.”

Bergh leans forward when she speaks about how even coincidental audiences can experience the show if they happen to be at the secret locations. She loves how its open to everybody.

“[This is] a more interesting piece of work than I had done in a long time...and it shows a lot of Los Angeles, which I love. I’m from the Midwest, so this city is very odd to me. You have to really seek out things in order to find it a beautiful city sometimes.”

When asked about contingency plans Closs-Farley and Bergh pause and agree. There is no contingency plan. “Its all an experiment,” Closs-Farley says, “the whole thing is an experiment, it’s never been done before.”

But they have faith that it will succeed. In fact, to them, “[*Hopscotch*] is already a success.”

Comparing it to live television, Bergh remembers, listen “When someone screwed up, it was funny, and kind of wonderful. There’s bound to be something that goes wrong in this, and I think that’s going to be part of the charm of it, and part of the interest, and part of the life of this project. I think its going to be good.”

Link: <http://www.ampersandla.com/undressing-hopscotch-costume-designers-reveal-their-aesthetic-vision/>



November 9, 2015

HOPSCOTCH

By Corinne DeWitt

Curious about *Hopscotch*? We've captured some sounds, sights, and feelings of this mobile opera — recollections of its Red, Yellow, and Green routes.

For those eager to remember or relive *Hopscotch*, and for those who wish they could have been there, we've created story maps that take you on the journey.

Hopscotch is the creation of Artistic Director Yuval Sharon and his team at The Industry, the revolutionary opera company that brought *Invisibles Cities* to Union Station in 2013. *Hopscotch* is an operatic collaboration by six composers, including *Hopscotch* Musical Director Marc Lowenstein, Veronika Krausas, Ellen Reid, Andrew McIntosh, David Rosenboom and Andrew Norman. They realized early on that *Hopscotch* would be a disorienting experience and embraced a lack of certain control. In addition to the diverse, site-specific backdrops that set each scene, the opera's story arc is nonlinear—chapters play out in no particular order.

These maps with original audio, video and photography by Corinne DeWitt are meant to record the *Hopscotch* experience in order to provide a hint, a taste, a Proustian memory of things past for those who saw it and to give those who cannot see it an entry point for knowing what happened. These are a journalism record.

Text supplied in these Red, Yellow and Green Maps about the discrete chapters is by Yuval Sharon, verbatim, as told at the first rehearsal for cast and crew in October. Read on for DeWitt's complete *Hopscotch* coverage.

Link: <http://www.ampersandla.com/hopscotch/>

Los Angeles Times

October 11, 2015

Essential Arts & Culture: Discuss what is 'Appropriate' and honk if you love this opera

By Kelly Scott

I'm Kelly Scott, arts and culture editor of the L.A. Times. The team here has experienced some powerful work recently -- plays, concerts and exhibitions that probe deep questions about race, age, family, feminism and the strength of the human spirit. Here's just a sampling of our coverage. You can find more daily at latimes.com/culturemonster.

Turn left at the soprano, please

How, exactly, can you perform opera in cars crisscrossing the streets of L.A.? Even after interviewing the Industry for our fall arts preview last month, the experimental opera company's "Hopscotch" was still shrouded in mystery. When the first preview finally rolled around last weekend, Times staff writer Jessica Gelt took her seat with notepad in hand. The show doesn't officially open until Oct. 31, but buckle up. You can join Gelt for the ride now.



Rusty Kennedy, left, and Alfredo Lopez perform in one of the scenes in a limo as part of "Hopscotch."
(Jenna Schoenefeld / For The Times)

Link: <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-essential-arts-html-20151011-htmlstory.html>

Los Angeles Times

November 4, 2015

'Hopscotch,' the opera performed in cars, extends its sold-out L.A. run

By Jessica Gelt



Performers Sarah Beaty and Victor Mazzone kiss during one of the stops in "Hopscotch," the opera-in-cars staged in Los Angeles by the experimental company the Industry. (Jenna Schoenefeld / For The Times)

"Hopscotch," a mobile opera performed by the experimental company the Industry in 24 cars driving the streets of Los Angeles, is extending its sold-out run.

The show, which takes place in cars and at specific sites downtown and on the east side of L.A., had been scheduled to run three times a day on weekends through Nov. 15. With those tickets sold out, the Industry announced Tuesday that it would sell tickets for shows on Nov. 21 and 22.

Those tickets go on sale at 10 a.m. Thursday at www.hopscotchopera.com.

The shows are at 10:45 a.m., 12:45 p.m. and 2:45 p.m. Tickets cost \$125 for the first two shows, and \$155 for the last show, which also serves as the grand finale of each day.

See the most-read entertainment stories >>

"People have already asked me if 'Hopscotch' could just have an open-ended run. While that is a logistical impossibility with a show involving so many artists, sites and civic agencies, we are thrilled to be able to share this project with nearly 600 additional audience members," said Yuval Sharon, the Industry's artistic director.



(Anne Cusack / Los Angeles Times)

If you can't score a ticket to ride with performers in vehicles, you can still watch the show for free as it's streamed live at a special structure called the Central Hub at the Southern California Institute of Architecture in downtown L.A.

That admission is first-come, first-served and allows you to tune into one or more of the opera's 24 live chapters, which will be streaming simultaneously to separate screens inside the hub. You can also watch 10 animated chapters that are available only online or at the hub.

Link: <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/culture/la-et-cm-hopscotch-opera-extended-industry-20151103-story.html>

Los Angeles Times

November 22, 2015

Essential Arts and Culture: The weight of the world and the hope of the new

By Kelly Scott

Half a world away, but feeling the pain

As he made his rounds last weekend, music critic Mark Swed heard a flood of affection for the city and its painful night. “Performers and audience members were asked throughout the concerts to think about why we were there,” Swed wrote, after performances at UCLA and Disney Hall. He felt the presence of French composer Gerard Grisey at Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker’s dance program set to his music, when French conductor Ludovic Morlot introduced the Philharmonic program, and at the Master Chorale’s concert in which the massive Disney Hall organ was lit like the tricolore. “Music, in the face of tragedy, is expected to offer solace and solidarity, but it can also provide vital perspective,” Swed wrote.



Violinist Sergey Khachatryan performs at Walt Disney Concert Hall on Nov. 14. (Barbara Davidson / Los Angeles Times)

A new greatest generation

If you are a regular reader of Charles McNulty, you know that he has raised questions about the program choices of the large institutional theaters in L.A., wondering why up-and-coming playwrights aren’t represented on L.A. stages. Apparently they listened. He points out in a notebook this week that it’s been an extraordinary fall in Los Angeles theater, with several theaters offering work by “the most exciting generation of playwrights to have burst onto the scene since I became a theater critic more than two decades ago” — Annie Baker, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Rajiv Joseph and Young Jean Lee. Lee’s play “Straight White Men” is now playing at the Kirk Douglas Theatre. Lee spoke to writer Deborah Vankin, saying her agenda “is to create a trap — for the audience and myself, so that we can’t get out of

whatever problem the play is wrestling with..." Another of McNulty's exciting generation, playwright Will Eno, gets his first major L.A. production, "Thom Paine," starring Rainn Wilson, at the Geffen Playhouse in January.



Missy Yager, left, David Bishins, Melora Hardin and Robert Beitzel in Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' play "Appropriate" at the Mark Taper Forum. (Craig Schwartz)

A hop, skip and a jump to #DTLA

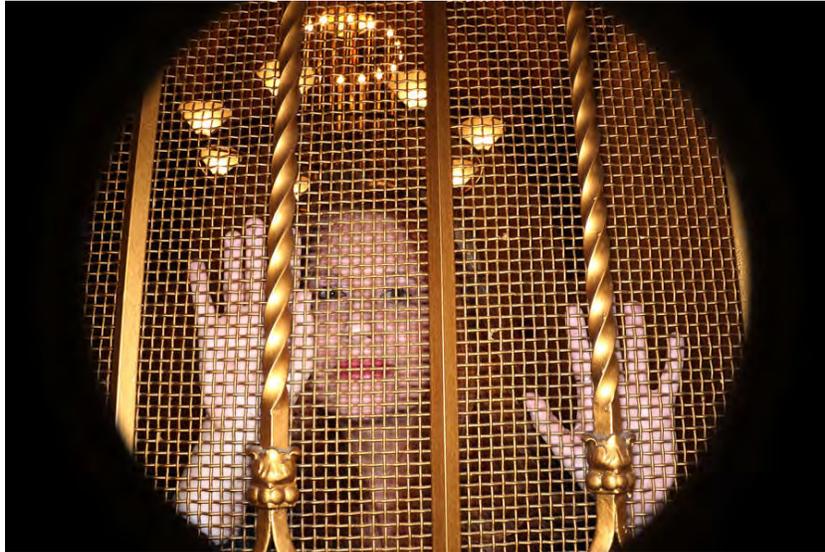
As the Industry's "Hopscotch," the "mobile opera for 44 cars" ended its extended run this weekend, architecture critic Christopher Hawthorne took a look at what it revealed about Los Angeles. The creators of "Hopscotch" tell their story while audience members ride limousines around neighborhoods close to downtown, raising questions about whether there is a center of L.A. or whether the city needs one. In its reliance on cars and car culture, it reached back to more familiar tropes about driving through the city. But Hawthorne notes that "... contemporary L.A., as it rehabilitates its historic architecture and makes agonizingly slow improvements to its transit network and public realm, is best understood at close range and a deliberate pace."



Stephen Bietler gets in character as Jameson along the Green Route of the opera-on-wheels "Hopscotch." (Anne Cusack / Los Angeles Times)

A Karen Finley for the 21st Century

It's been 25 years since the height of performance artist Karen Finley's notoriety as one of the so-called NEA Four, and her newest work finds her quite a way from what brought her so much attention back then. In "The Jackie Look," Finley impersonates Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis "in order to examine how humans view and process trauma," Jessica Gelt wrote after talking with her. Finley performed at the Broad museum Friday, and showed some of her art work at the Coagula Curatorial.



Pictured is performance artist Karen Finley. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

You are there on Pride Rock

"The Lion King" keeps rolling along on Broadway, but its producers aren't getting complacent. Disney Theatricals released a virtual reality version of "The Circle of Life," the music's opening number, last week. Steve Zeitchik, who has written about the future of virtual reality in other forms of entertainment, asked whether the move signals an end to the insistence by many producers of live theater that the "live" part is paramount.



Jelany Remy as Simba in the Broadway musical "The Lion King." (Joan Marcus / Associated Press)

In short

The latest chapter in the long-running Southwest Museum saga was a report by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. ... You can't beat the creative team behind "Ay, Carmela."

What we're reading...

In the New Yorker, "Our Betrayal of Syrian and Iraqi Refugees" by George Packer, in which he calls out craven moral cowardice in Washington. And in the New York Review of Books, "The Syrian Kurds Are Winning!" by Jonathan Steele — a note of hope in an otherwise dark week.

– Christopher Knight, art critic

Another perspective: New Yorker music critic Alex Ross writes about "Hopscotch."

– Bret Israel, Sunday Calendar editor

Novelist Ian McEwan reporting from Paris.

–Charles McNulty, theater critic

...and listening to

Tod Machover's crowd-sourced "Symphony in D," which the Detroit Symphony premieres this weekend, is made from hundreds of samples and musical contributions from Detroit musicians, professional and amateur, all ages and from all musical walks of life. The DSO has a webcast of this one-of-a-kind Motor City musical mosaic at www.DSO.org.

– Mark Swed, music critic

Link: <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-essential-arts-html-20151122-htmlstory.html>

The New York Times

September 9, 2015

Classical Music Listings for the Fall Season and Beyond

By ZACHARY WOOLFE

October

'HOPSCOTCH' The latest production from Yuval Sharon's ingenious company the Industry, this sprawling experiment places audience members and artists together in cars roaming Los Angeles, featuring music by six composers. Opens Oct. 31, theindustryla.org.



October 10, 2015

Floor It and Sing! L.A. Opera Company Performs New Opera in Moving Cars, Starting Today

By Joe Gambino

The Industry, a Los Angeles-based opera company, presents *Hopscotch*, a new opera performed in moving cars on a road. The show will be performed three times daily (10:45 AM, 12:45 PM and 2:45 PM) on weekends Oct. 31-Nov. 15. Previews start Oct. 11, and continue Oct. 24 and 25.

The new opera will take four audience members at a time on one of three different routes (red, green or yellow). Each route is divided into ten-minute chapters that all take place in different cars. The chapters are not presented chronologically so no one route contains the entirety of the show, but each route stands alone as a total experience. All of the chapters, plus additional chapters featuring the animation of six artists, can be seen at the central hub, a temporary structure in the Southern California Institute of Architecture's parking lot in downtown L.A.

The opera was written by Veronika Kausas, Marc Lowenstein, Andrew McIntosh, Andrew Norman, Ellen Reid and David Rosenbloom.

Hopscotch is described as "a modern retelling of Orpheus and Eurydice: the tragic love of Orpheus, son of the muse Calliope, for his wife, Eurydice, whom he follows to the underworld with his lyre in an ill-fated attempt to return her to life. [Yuval] Sharon's version is set in L.A. and features a Latina protagonist named Lucha," according to the L.A. Times.

The Industry's artistic director Sharon told the Times, "We're telling the audience, 'Just trust us. You don't know where you're going, but if you get in this car, you'll get back to your original car safely. What will happen to your experience of the city and the landscape if you don't know where you're going?'"

For more information visit HopscotchOpera.com.

Link: <http://www.playbill.com/news/article/floor-it-and-sing-l.a.-opera-company-performs-new-opera-in-moving-cars-starting-today-366588>

The logo for Playbill, featuring the word "PLAYBILL" in a bold, black, serif font with a registered trademark symbol (®) to the upper right of the "L". The text is centered on a bright yellow rectangular background.

October 30, 2015

Floor It and Sing! L.A. Opera Company Performs New Opera in Moving Cars, Opening Today

By Robert Viagas and Joe Gambino

The Industry, a Los Angeles-based opera company, presents *Hopscotch*, a new opera performed in moving cars on a road that officially opens Oct. 31. The show is performed three times daily (10:45 AM, 12:45 PM and 2:45 PM) on weekends through Nov. 15. Previews started Oct. 11.

The new opera takes four audience members at a time on one of three different routes (red, green or yellow). Each route is divided into ten-minute chapters that all take place in different cars. The chapters are not presented chronologically, so no single route contains the entirety of the show, but each route stands alone as a total experience. All of the chapters, plus additional chapters featuring the animation of six artists, can be seen at the central hub, a temporary structure in the Southern California Institute of Architecture's parking lot in downtown L.A.

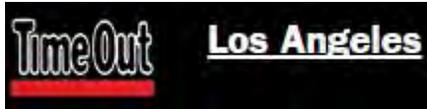
The opera was written by Veronika Kausas, Marc Lowenstein, Andrew McIntosh, Andrew Norman, Ellen Reid and David Rosenbloom.

Hopscotch is described as "a modern retelling of Orpheus and Eurydice: the tragic love of Orpheus, son of the muse Calliope, for his wife, Eurydice, whom he follows to the underworld with his lyre in an ill-fated attempt to return her to life. [Yuval] Sharon's version is set in L.A. and features a Latina protagonist named Lucha," according to the L.A. Times.

Industry artistic director Yuval Sharon told the Times, "We're telling the audience, 'Just trust us. You don't know where you're going, but if you get in this car, you'll get back to your original car safely. What will happen to your experience of the city and the landscape if you don't know where you're going?'"

For more information visit HopscotchOpera.com.

Link: <http://playbill.com/news/article/floor-it-and-sing-l.a.-opera-company-performs-new-opera-in-moving-cars-opening-today-369463/print>



October 27, 2015

7 things to do in LA on Halloween that have nothing to do with Halloween

By Michael Juliano

For some of us, **Halloween** is an excuse to **party** or go **trick-or-treating**. For others, it's a day to hide underneath the covers and from any ghoulish revelry or **Carnaval**-caused road closures. And for the rest of us, it's a tired tradition that serves as a reminder to start thinking about **Thanksgiving**. If you're looking to keep your Saturday as Halloween-free as possible, check out these seven events.

Hopscotch

Strap in as LA's experimental opera company presents a new opera that takes place in 24 real, moving cars on LA streets. Though the performance has been running in previews, tonight marks the official opening.

Live Talks LA: *Welcome to Night Vale*

Join actress Felicia Day as she hosts this chat with Jeffrey Cranor and Joseph Fink, creators of the *Welcome to Night Vale* podcast. Their old-timey radio show is full of mysterious storytelling, but we think this chat should be safely Halloween-free.

Moby-Dick

See the LA Opera tackle Melville's classic adventure novel live on stage—it's not a far stretch to turn the story into an opera thanks to all of that maritime drama.

The Swarm

Watch the long-form improv team of Sean Conroy, Andrew Daly, Billy Merritt and Andrew Secunda revive their long-running, near-legendary New York show for this UCB Sunset performance.

The Sound of Music

Relive the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic—the film version turned 50 this year—during the final night of this stage production.

Stan Lee's Comikaze

Skip the Halloween events at this three-day comic expo—there'll be a trick-or-treating event, as well as an appearance from Elvira, Mistress of the Dark—and instead try not to nerd out in the presence of Carrie Fisher and Marvel icon Stan Lee.

Oktoberfest

Raise a stein to the German beer holiday before the few remaining celebrations wind down this weekend.

Link: <http://www.timeout.com/los-angeles/blog/7-things-to-do-in-la-on-halloween-that-have-nothing-to-do-with-halloween-102715>

AMERICAN THEATRE

A PUBLICATION OF THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

October 26, 2015

The Buzz: What 6 Theatre Folks Are Working On and Watching For BY ROB WEINERT-KENDT

Jessica Hanna, managing and producing director of L.A.'s [Bootleg Theater](#), just finished hosting the third installment of [Live Arts Exchange/LAX Festival](#), an extravaganza of locally grown experimental theatre coproduced with Los Angeles Performance Practice. Coming up at the Bootleg Nov. 6–Dec. 12 is a coproduction with [Rogue Artists Ensemble](#) of *Wood Boy Dog Fish*, a macabre multimedia mashup of the Pinocchio story, adapted by Chelsea Sutton and the company and directed by Sean Cawelti, with music by Ego Plum and Adrien Prévost. Outside of her theatre, Hanna said she's "super-excited" about [Hopscotch](#), billed as a "mobile opera for 24 cars," Oct. 31–Nov. 15. Hanna describes it as "small audiences in cars driven around the Eastside and Downtown," experiencing a story divided into 36 chapters. "I think there's supposed to be a hub at the architecture school on Sante Fe, where all the episodes in the cars will be live-streamed and you can go watch the whole thing over four hours." It's all the brainchild of a company called the Industry, whose artistic director, Yuval Sharon, Hanna called "a genius," saying she counted the Industry's 2013 piece [Invisible Cities](#)—in which audiences followed singers and dancers via headphones all over L.A.'s Union Station during regular working hours—"in my top 10 theatrical experiences."



Link: <http://www.americantheatre.org/2015/10/26/the-buzz-what-6-theatre-folks-are-working-on-and-watching-for/>



October 26, 2015

KCRW's 5 Things To Do This Week



EXPERIENCE: Hopscotch Opera

Now we're not 100% sure how this mobile theater production works but it's worth checking out. They turn LA roads into a moving operatic experience involving you, 24 cars, and getting in and out – or not. We're dying to hear how it works with traffic and back seat drivers!

LET US KNOW HOW IT GOES



October 26, 2015

5 Design Things to Do This Week

By Avishay Artsy



4) Hopscotch

The Industry is an experimental opera company that has become well-known for its risk-taking productions in unexpected venues in Los Angeles, including in Union Station. Their latest production, Hopscotch, is performed for four audience members at a time in the intimacy of a car. There are 8 chapters, consisting of a 90-minute experience. Tickets are mostly sold out. But all 24 journeys throughout Los Angeles will be live-streamed for free at the Central Hub, a temporary structure at SCI-Arc, the Southern California Institute of Architecture. There are also animation sequences that will be screened there. Once a day, all of the car journeys converge in a grand finale.

When: Performances will be held Oct. 31-Nov. 15 at 10:45 am, 12:45 pm and 2:45 pm.

Where: Each route has an individualized starting point, e-mailed to you on the Monday before your performance. The Central Hub has free performances at SCI-Arc, 350 Merrick Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

Tickets: You can purchase tickets here or get info about free performances here.

October 29, 2015

Opening: An Opera Told in 24 Moving Cars

Zip around LA while sitting cheek-by-jowl among singers and musicians.

By Alysia Gray Painter



Hop into a car with a performer or two and experience opera on the road via "Hopscotch." The innovative shows'll be on the streets of LA from Oct. 31 through Nov. 15.

Chances are good that, while sitting at a traffic light, you've seen the driver of the car next to yours warbling along to some popular ditty while using the steering wheel as an impromptu keyboard and/or drum kit.



What you likely *haven't* seen is an audience sitting inside the car, along with the driver, or at least an audience that's paid for the experience of a performance on the go. That's about to change when a "mobile opera for 24 cars" takes to the streets of Southern California from [Saturday, Oct. 31 through Sunday, Nov. 15](#).

Cast away any set-in-stone thoughts you may have about an opera having to take place on a stage before rows of plush chairs and an orchestra pit. "Hopscotch," a song-filled story told inside a series of automobiles, is also operatic, in every sense, despite the absence of a traditional stage and seats.

But with a major company, as any big opera would boast: Some 150 artists are involved with the production, and their skills cover the gamut, from songcraft to designing to many talents beyond. Let us also commend the two dozen drivers on the playbill; it isn't a job title frequently seen on an opera's rundown sheet.

Envelope-pushing arts collective The Industry is behind this fresh take on musical storytelling. Told in 36 chapters, "Hopscotch" is "divided among three geographic routes -- Red, Yellow, and Green -- and 10 animated chapters." The tale takes on an accident, childhood memories, family history, puppetry, science, Paris, and love in a huge epic sweep, all involving the streets.

And all involving a light sense of the surreal that isn't always promised by a staging of a known show. You won't know where you're off to, once you step inside the vehicle that awaits, and you won't know where you're stopping or what you'll see and hear there.

There's a refreshing aspect of letting go and faith to the performances, two things not often asked of an audience in any situation or setting.

An audience based in Southern California also seems the ideal fit for a tale spun around spinning wheels and dramatic destinations. If we truly live in our cars 'round these parts, surely we can do more in them beyond drive (and eat and drink coffee and sing along to the radio)?

Why can't an opera take place within an automobile?

Curious passengers and lovers of innovative art, [your mysterious carriages await.](#)

Link: <http://www.nbclosangeles.com/entertainment/the-scene/Opening-An-Opera-Told-in-24-Moving-Cars-338380932.html>



October 29, 2015

Classical music coming in waves this weekend

By Timothy Mangan

It's a whale of a weekend, a classical slam, operageddon, symphomania, whatever you want to call it, just a whole lot of concerts going on. Were I several people, I'd send us all out. As it is, I'll just have to grit my teeth and miss most of this stuff.

Why is it happening now? I can't answer that except to say that there are plenty of halls about that need to be filled, and our local classical music organizations are filling them. Anyway, here's a quick list of what's going on.

It somehow seems appropriate that Jake Heggie's "Moby-Dick" will receive its local premiere this weekend, courtesy of Los Angeles Opera (7:30 p.m. Saturday at Dorothy Chandler Pavilion). Herman Melville's epic novel has been pared down to a relatively concise three hours by Heggie, perhaps the most successful opera composer working today, and his regular librettist, George Scheer. The opera, and the eye-dazzling multimedia production, have already been presented widely and received glowingly. Jay Hunter Morris re-creates the role of Captain Ahab.

A little oddly, L.A. Opera is presenting Philip Glass's "Dracula," a live soundtrack to the 1931 film, in competition with "Moby-Dick" (8 p.m. Thursday-Friday, 4 and 8 p.m. Saturday, at the restored Theatre at Ace Hotel). Glass and the Kronos Quartet perform.

Meanwhile, the much-anticipated, multi-composer indie opera "Hopscotch" is launched in a limited run by The Industry. It's described as a mobile opera in 24 cars, with listeners entering vehicles to gad about one of three routes with the musicians, stopping off in various locales, each receiving their own unique performance. (10:45 a.m., 12:45 and 2:45 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; departure points are supplied with ticket purchase). I know, right?

Great French pianist and L.A. resident Jean-Yves Thibaudet opens the piano recital series at the acoustically splendid Soka Performing Arts Center (3 p.m. Sunday). His demanding program features music by Schumann ("Kinderszenen," Sonata No.1) and Ravel ("Miroirs," "Pavane pour une infante defunte").

At the same time over at Samueli Theater, pianist Orli Shaham begins her eighth season as director of the Pacific Symphony's chamber music series, aka Café Ludwig. She'll join the orchestra's principal musicians in performances of Korngold's rarely heard Suite from "Much Ado About Nothing," Reinecke's Flute Sonata and Schubert's beloved "Trout" Quintet.

The Philharmonic Society of Orange County gets its chamber music season underway as well, presenting the highly regarded Danish String Quartet in its Orange County debut (3 p.m. Sunday at Irvine Barclay Theatre). A group known for incorporating contemporary repertoire into its programs, the Danes will perform Thomas Adès' "Arcadiana" along with quartets by Haydn and Beethoven.

Acclaimed Swedish clarinetist Håkan Rosengren, on faculty at Cal State Fullerton, also gives a solo recital 4 p.m. Sunday in Meng Concert Hall, music by Schumann, Weber, Saint-Saëns and Chausson.

Conductor John Alexander and the Pacific Chorale begin their 44th season together with a performance of Brahms' canonic "Ein Deutsches Requiem" (5:30 p.m. Sunday at Segerstrom Concert Hall). Soprano Elissa Johnston and baritone Brian Mulligan are the soloists; the Pacific Symphony assists.

And then there's conductor Semyon Bychkov and the Los Angeles Philharmonic performing "An Alpine Symphony" by Richard Strauss (8 p.m. Thursday; 11 a.m. Friday; 2 p.m. Sunday at Walt Disney Concert Hall). It's an epic piece best experienced live. The ubiquitous Mendelssohn Violin Concerto serves as prelude, but stylish French virtuoso Renaud Capuçon is the more than compensating soloist.

Link: <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/opera-689739-music-sunday.html>

ARCHITECT

November 12, 2015

An Opera House for a Show on Wheels

By Nate Berg



The Hopscotch Central Hub pavilion in the parking lot of the Southern California Institute of Architecture.

In the parking lot of the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) in Los Angeles, an 80-foot-wide donut-like structure recently appeared. With a cylindrical opening to the sky, the temporary structure is a viewing pavilion for *Hopscotch*, a "mobile opera" set in 24 limousines driving around L.A. Though the ticketed audience is riding around with the singers and musicians inside the limos, the viewing pavilion is an auxiliary space where non-ticketed audience members can experience the spectacle.

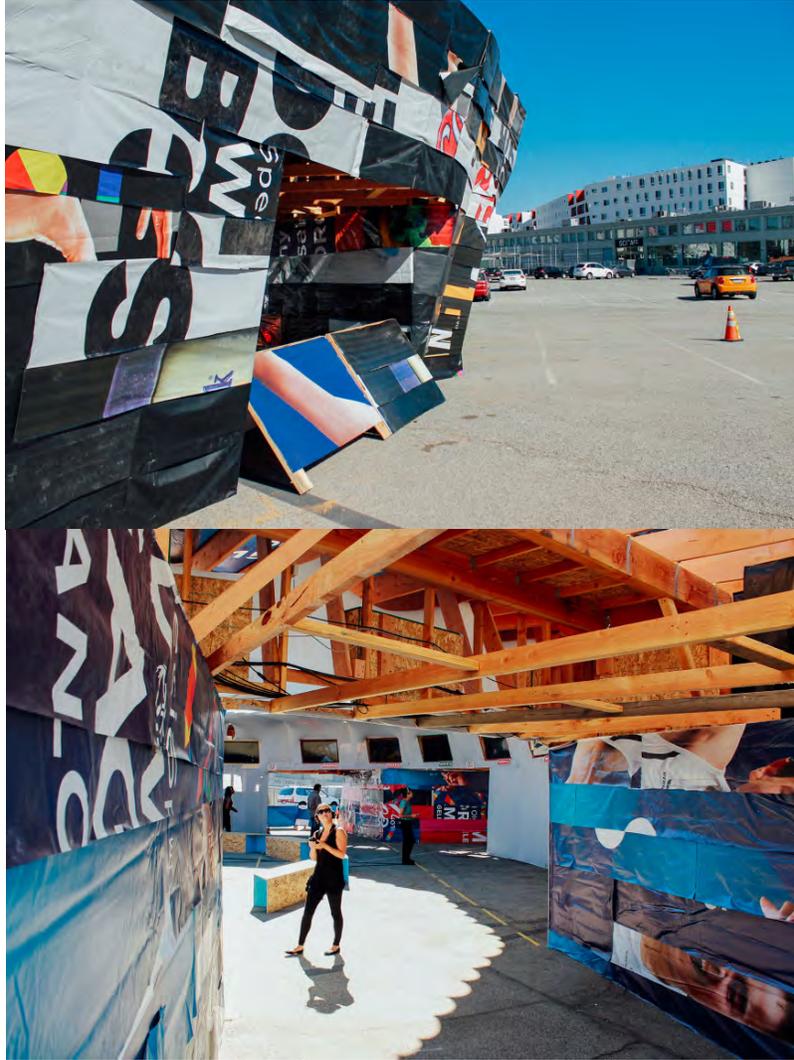
The inside of the pavilion is ringed with 24 video screens, each carrying a live video feed from the performances happening in the roving limos. Audience members gather in the donut hole to don headphones that can tap into the audio feed of any of the limos. Tucked in a back nook, out of view, is an intense audio/video control room where a team of technicians wrangles the two dozen video and audio feeds that are streaming in over a cellular network throughout the three performances held each performance day. Entry to the viewing area is free but first come-first served.



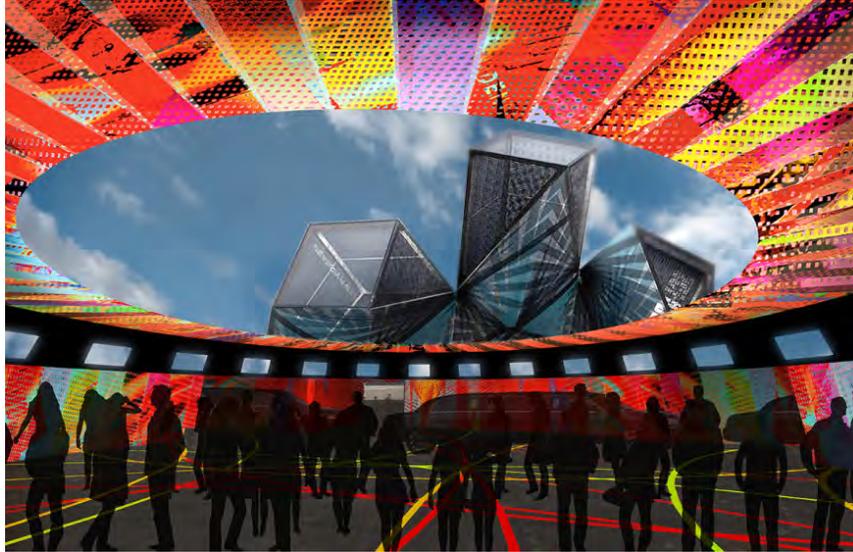
Designed by SCI-Arc faculty Constance Vale and Emmett Zeifman and constructed by carpenters and students during the first half of the fall semester, the wooden joist-based structure, called the Central Hub, is covered with woven strips of vinyl from old billboards. "We're borrowing from Los Angeles car culture to produce the structure," Vale says.



Hopscotch is the sort of unconventional show that's become the trademark of its producers, the experimental opera company The Industry. In the Central Hub, people can try to experience each of the 24 chapters as they are performed over and over again for the rotating groups of mobile audience members who'll be getting into and out of the limos throughout the performance. Each limo ride tells one of the opera's 36 chapters. Yes, 36 chapters: in addition to the 24 chapters that play out in the limousines, there are 10 more chapters available online as animations, plus the finale—and, if you're not already confused, a "missing" chapter that leaves the story forever incomplete. Audience members—four per limo, 96 per performance—will experience only eight of these chapters, each from a non-sequential part of the overall narrative. Inside the Central Hub, people will technically be able to watch each of those 24 chapters, as well as the finale. "It's a choice for the audience how they want to experience it," says creative director Yuval Sharon. "There's no right way."



In the shadow of the dark crystalline form of SCI-Arc's graduation pavilion, designed by faculty member Marcelo Spina, Intl. Assoc. AIA, and Georgina Huljich of L.A.-based P-A-T-T-E-R-N-S, the Central Hub structure is almost trapezoidal and seemingly impenetrable. But around the corner are a few large openings that bring audience members into its open center. These entry points are wide—wide enough, in fact, for the limousines to drive through, which they all do at the end of the day. One by one, all 24 limos drive into the central hub to unload the performers and mobile audience members for the opera's grand finale. "The idea is that the artists that you've been seeing on the screen sort of pop out of the screen and into real life right in front of you," Sharon says.



Rendering of the Central Hub interior

Vale says designing the structure offered many chances to interpret L.A.'s driving culture. "It's hovering between a couple of different [building] types perhaps, but it is in many ways a stage set. It's also this kind of auto reception, an inverted façade in which autos are received inside rather than at the front door," she says. Much of the challenge in designing the structure, Vale says, was to efficiently accommodate the audience and all the technology and wiring and antennas—only to have a bunch of cars drive through it all. "They destabilize the center of the Hub for just a moment when they pull through. It reconfigures the interior, in a way."

And, for that brief final moment, the dispersed, somewhat chaotic mobile opera converges in on itself, and the Central Hub transforms from a high-tech live-stream viewing station to play a more traditional architectural role: opera house.

The final performance is scheduled for Nov. 22. "Plans concerning the removal of the project are not yet finalized, but SCI-Arc intends to donate the used wood and hardware to a charitable organization," Vale says.

The remaining performances of Hopscotch will be held on Nov. 14, 15, 21, and 22, at 10:45 a.m., 12:45 p.m., and 2:45 p.m. According to the Hopscotch website, tickets are sold out, but there is a discounted ticket lottery. Viewing at the Central Hub is free.

Link: http://www.architectmagazine.com/design/an-opera-house-for-a-show-on-wheels_o



October 28 2015

Check Out The Best Los Angeles Things To Do In November

Edited by Christina Xenos

Hopscotch

Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 7-8 and 14-15. An audacious new operatic experience about a disappearance across time, takes place in a network of crisscrossing cars throughout the city. The work can be experienced in the intimacy of a car, with artists and audience members sharing a confined space, or for free at the Central Hub, a large outdoor pop-up structure at the Southern California Institute of Architecture. At the Hub, 24 journeys are live-streamed simultaneously to create a dizzying panorama of life in **Los Angeles**. The experience is a collaboration of the Industry and its artistic director Yuval Sharon with six L.A.-based composers, six writers, more than 100 artists, Sennheiser, Southern California Institute for Architecture and 5D Global Studio. (Departure points vary with the route.) Central Hub, 960 E. Third St., downtown. hopscotchopera.com

Link: <http://wherela.com/blog/2015/10/28/events-los-angeles-things-to-do-in-november/>



October 29, 2015

Weekend Roundup

Find the best Los Angeles things to do for the weekend of 12.3.15

Edited by Christina Xenos



OPERA

Hopscotch

Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 7-8 and 14-15. An audacious new operatic experience about a disappearance across time, takes place in a network of crisscrossing cars throughout the city. The work can be experienced in the intimacy of a car, with artists and audience members sharing a confined space, or for free at the Central Hub, a large outdoor pop-up structure at the Southern California Institute of Architecture. At the Hub, 24 journeys are live-streamed simultaneously to create a dizzying panorama of life in **Los Angeles**. The experience is a collaboration of the Industry and its artistic director Yuval Sharon with six L.A.-based composers, six writers, more than 100 artists, Sennheiser, Southern California Institute for Architecture and 5D Global Studio. (Departure points vary with the route.) (photo: Dana Ross) Central Hub, 960 E. Third St., downtown. hopscotchopera.com

Link: <http://wherela.com/blog/2015/10/29/events-la-weekend-events-roundup-10-29-15/>



November 4, 2015

You Have Just Three More Weeks To See Hopscotch Opera Live!

By LA Independent



Los Angelinos have just two more weeks to catch a performance of “Hopscotch: A Mobile Opera for 24 Cars,” which has become the hottest performance in Los Angeles ever since opening on Halloween. The mobile opera takes place inside a fleet of stretch limousines stocked with performers, which travel in a bizarre caravan through downtown, Elysian Park, and Boyle Heights.

Four spectators crowd into a limousine with the actors, then play musical cars as the limousines stop at designated “sets” around the city. Director Yuval Sharon is the “strikingly inventive” mastermind behind innovative opera company The Industry, which is disrupting an art form that hasn’t been this exciting for decades, possibly even centuries.

In a recent Los Angeles Times review, Mark Swed confirms that the mobile opera accomplishes the impossible repeatedly throughout its 36 chapters:

“A couple of these scenes are drop-dead gorgeous. Others take your breath away for their audacity. To stand on the roof of one of those fancy new arts district apartment buildings, with stunning city and mountain views, and hear a faint trumpet playing from atop a distant tower can prove ineffably moving. To be in a limo while an actor is in earnest conversation with a motorcyclist driving alongside, thanks to the magic of wireless microphones, is unnerving.”

Some reviewers have dubbed it the Asphalt Opera. Asphalt is a familiar sight to Los Angelinos. Not only does it bubble up from the depths of the famed La Brea Tar Pits, but an estimated 18 billion tons of it cover 2.6 million miles of U.S. roadways. What’s more, 94% of parking lots are covered with the black paving material. But never before have the words asphalt and operatic arts fit so perfectly together.

Sharon and The Industry didn't invent the mobile opera — Robert Moran produced “39 Minutes for 39 Autos” in San Francisco in 1969 — but they are disrupting the L.A. fine arts scene for the better. It's hard for reviewers to write about Hopscotch without resorting to hyperbolic cliches, like it will “take your breath away” (the LA Times) and “a theatrical experience that defies description and will blow your mind” (Broadway World).

Dedicated fans and opera virgins have until November 22 to catch this mobile opera in the field. Information on tickets can be found on the Hopscotch website, and free performances can be viewed remotely at the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc).

Link: <http://laindependent.com/you-have-just-three-more-weeks-to-see-hopscotch-opera-live/>

November 5, 2015

Operatic Hopscotch hits the road across LA

By Emily Mae Czachor AND Daniel Anderson

Experimental experience finds audience members listening to librettos while traveling around town



Phillip King (harp), Jonah Levy and Delaram Kamareh ride in style. (Photo/Dana Ross)

People do many things while stuck in LA traffic, but sing arias?

Hopscotch, a new so-called mobile opera, premiered last weekend to critical and popular acclaim. The unique experience was created by The Industry, an independent company behind experimental productions that expand the definition of opera. It unfolds throughout the city in unconventional locations — the Bradbury Building, Chinatown and even the Los Angeles River — as audience members travel to the venues in 24 cars, often sitting next to the performers and musicians.

The offbeat production, directed by Yuval Sharon, features an artistic team that represents a cross-section of classical and new music in Los Angeles, including more than 20 faculty, alumni and students of the USC Thornton School of Music. It's a showcase for the music of six Los Angeles composers — two of whom, Veronika Krausas and Andrew Norman, are USC Thornton faculty members, and one, Andrew McIntosh '12, an alumnus.

Krausas, associate professor of practice in the composition department at USC Thornton, believes that the intimacy of the production is a way of integrating viewers into the story.

"In addition to the musicians and actors, both you, as an audience member, and the city of LA, become characters in the piece," she said.

No solitary confinement this time

The Industry is known for integrating audience members into their performances — and the city itself. Their 2014 production of Christopher Cerrone’s Pulitzer Prize-nominated opera, *Invisible Cities*, took place at LA’s Union Station, with audience members wandering freely, tuning in to the singers and musicians via wireless headphones.

“I love working with Yuval,” Krausas said. “He has such a refreshing outlook on life and art and manages to create experiences that engage both audiences and performers.”

Hopscotch was inspired by Julio Cortazar’s novel of the same name; each of the six composers crafted portions of a new story, in collaboration with a team of librettists.

“Usually I spend months and months in solitary confinement, planning every last detail of a piece that only becomes a collaborative act when it is finally performed,” Norman said. “But with *Hopscotch*, I was collaborating with all sorts of artists from the get-go. It was great fun to watch a piece being born in this collective way, to watch it being formed out of a genuine exchange of ideas.”

Which route would you take?

With action spread across dozens of central Los Angeles locations, including downtown, Boyle Heights, the Arts District and Little Tokyo, *Hopscotch* audiences experience one of three distinct “routes”: Red, Yellow or Green, with each offering just a glimpse of a much larger narrative.

One of the musicians on the Red route is Matt Otto MM ’13, a horn player and DMA candidate who performs a scene by composer Ellen Reid set on the rooftop of a Toy District loft.

Twenty-four times a day, Otto and fello horn player Tawnee Lynn Pumphrey MM ’05 meet arriving cars at a downstairs service entrance and then dash up a stairwell to take their places for the performance, just as bewildered audience members step out onto a spectacular urban vista.

“It’s one of the most complex creative endeavors I’ve ever been involved with,” Otto said. “When we got to the first tech rehearsal, I was like ‘what did I get myself into?’”

Krausas wrote four scenes for the production: a film-noir-inspired dream sequence that takes place in the Bradbury Building; chapters that take place in an Airstream trailer or while driving through a cemetery; and a scene set in a Chinatown pedestrian arcade, which features tarot cards and a music box that the composer crafted specially for the production.

“There’s so much going on, and there’s no way you’re going to get everything,” Krausas said. “But you get this wonderful sense of adventure.”

Tough logistics

Needless to say, with more than 100 musicians and artists involved in the performance, the logistics presented serious creative challenges for the composers. In order for Krausas’ Bradbury Building scene to move succinctly through the structure’s labyrinthine interior, she was confronted by issues of timing and communication, among both performers and roving audience members.

“We had to factor in ‘how long does something take?’ and ‘how do you signal the musicians?’,” she said. “If someone’s on the first floor and another performer’s on the fourth floor, they have to know that something’s happening.” In this way, Krausas described the opera as “a little bit like a film score, coordinating all of the elements. It’s not just about writing the music.”

Otto’s delicately timed scene atop the Toy District loft not only incorporates musicians on adjacent rooftops, but a singer in the throes of the opera’s dramatic conclusion.

“Logistically, it was a little rough at first,” he said. “But once we made it through rehearsals and hit our stride, the music and the emotions of the story really started to shine through.”

While tickets for the opera’s 24 cars are largely sold out (an additional weekend of performances will go on sale this week), the general public is invited to experience *Hopscotch* from the production’s central hub located on the downtown campus of SCI-Arc (The Southern California Institute of Architecture), where live video and audio streams reveal the totality of the mobile experience. At the end of each performance day, the cars and performers converge on the hub for a spectacular finale, featuring music by Norman, which is also free to the public.

The opening weekend of *Hopscotch* was an overwhelming success, and Krausas believes that the production offers audience members an entirely new perspective of Los Angeles.

“It’s rediscovering your city as a tourist,” Krausas said. “It’s very magical in that way.”

Link: <https://news.usc.edu/88402/operatic-hopscotch-hits-the-road-across-la/>



November 16, 2015

Hopscotch: An Opera On Wheels

By Madison Mills



If you live in Los Angeles, you're no stranger to traffic. But what if while starting and stopping as you navigate the crowded freeway, you could experience an opera? One composer has given Angelenos the opportunity to do exactly that, with a new opera called Hopscotch.

Instead of watching the opera in a traditional theater, this performance happens in the back of limousines, on the banks of the L.A. River, inside the Bradbury Building and in dozens of other locations on the streets of Los Angeles.

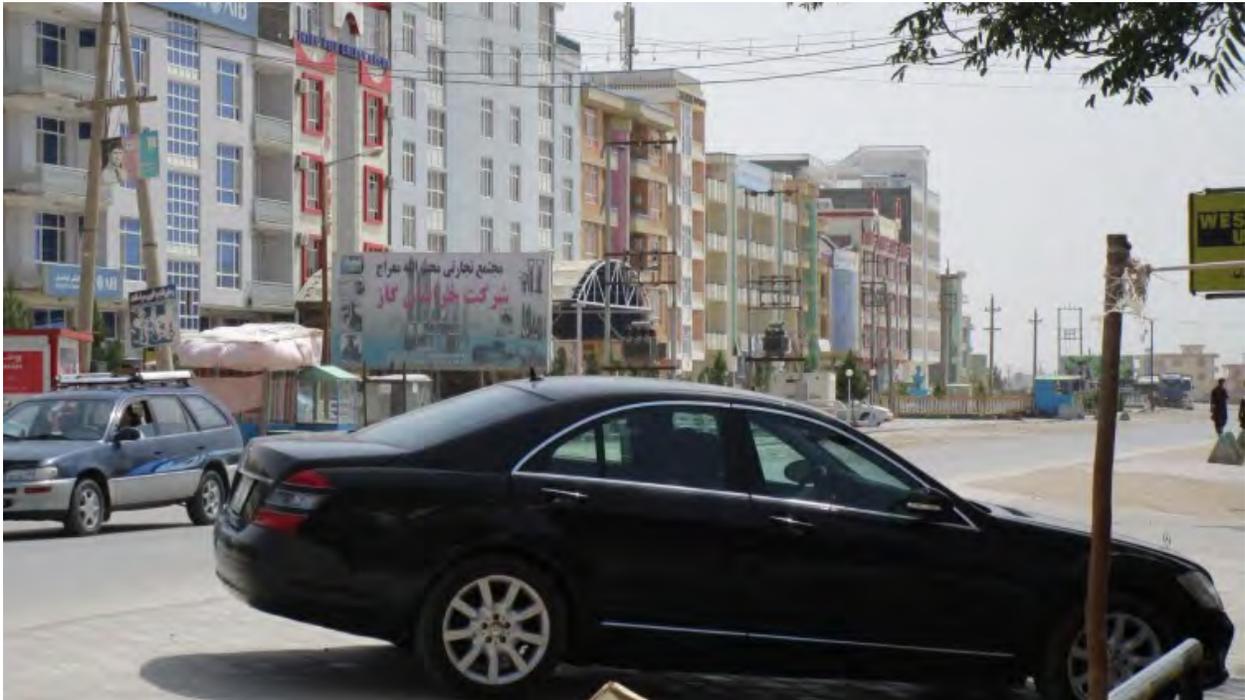
If it sounds confusing, then the creators have met their goal. The performance is meant to suspend your sense of space and time, so you are completely immersed in the moment to moment experience of this entirely mobile opera.

Link: <http://www.atvn.org/news/2015/11/hopscotch-opera-wheels>

November 2, 2015

Verwirrende Reise in der Limo durch LA

By Von Kerstin Zilm



Insgesamt gibt es drei *unterschiedliche* Operntouren durch die Stadt Los Angeles. (Jürgen Webermann)

Am Treffpunkt mitten in Downtown Los Angeles erklärt eine Assistentin noch die "Hopscotch"-Regeln, da geht die mobile Oper auch schon los.

"Welcome to the lab. Two on one side, one on the other please."

Vier Zuschauer sinken in die Ledersitze der schwarzen Limousine am Straßenrand. Lila Licht, verdunkelte Scheibe, ein Smartphone filmt Publikum und Sänger, der plötzlich einsteigt.

"Doctor Jameson, they are ready for you."

Zum Anfassen nah sitzt er im weißen Kittel neben den Opernbesuchern.

Baustellen, Straßencafés und der blaue Himmel zwischen Wolkenkratzern werden zur Kulisse. Die Karosse dämpft die Großstadtgeräusche von der Straße. Die Limousine hält vor einem alten Theater. Ein schwarz gekleideter Mann mit weißen Handschuhen weist auf den Seiteneingang. Er drückt einem Zuschauer eine Kamera in die Hand.

"Watch your step. Chapter 31."

Eine Sängerin in gelbem Sommerkleid geht die Stufen hinauf zur Empore. Der Blick fällt hinab zum Sänger in goldenem Gewand auf der Bühne.

Die weißen Handschuhe leiten zum Ausgang - eine Feuertreppe.

Das sind zwei von acht Kapiteln einer Strecke von Hopscotch. Insgesamt gibt es drei unterschiedliche Operntouren durch die Stadt. Alle führen durch Downtown und den Ostteil von Los Angeles. Zuschauer erleben eine moderne Version des Mythos von Orpheus und Eurydike, eine Geschichte von Liebe und Verlust, von Alltag und Unterwelt. Sie kennen weder das Ziel noch den Weg. Perfekt, sagt "Hopscotch"-Regisseur Yuval Sharon:

"So viele Unsicherheiten wie möglich ist eigentlich das Ziel. Sobald man unsicher ist, beobachtet man alles mit ganz anderen Augen und mit ganz anderen Ohren. Und dann sieht man die Stadt hoffentlich wie man die Stadt nie vorher gesehen hat."

Auf Trapezkunst zwischen Nebelschwaden folgen ein Dialog auf menschenleerer Straße, Oper, Jazz und Folklore im ausgetrockneten Flussbett und auf Parkhausdächern.

Dazwischen vorbeirasende Projektionen auf eine Tunnelwand und intime Limousinen-Szenen: Arien schmetternde Sopranistinnen, Melodien trällernde Sänger, Trommelsolo, Akkordeon, eine E-Gitarre. Die Zuschauer ständig in Bewegung, begeistert und verwirrt.

Wer Tickets für alle drei Strecken bekommt, erlebt Los Angeles aus vielen ungewohnten Perspektiven – und trotzdem nicht die gesamte Geschichte. Manche Kapitel gibt es nur als Zeichentrick auf der "Hopscotch"-Website. Staus und Straßensperren, Wetter und Laufgeschwindigkeit verändern jede dieser ungewöhnlichen Opernvorstellungen.

Smartphone-Kameras übertragen das Geschehen in eine Zentrale, eine luftige Holzkonstruktion mit 24 Bildschirmen. Eintritt hier ist kostenlos. Inklusive Finale.

Zwischen Sängern, Tänzern und Zuschauern, die aus ihren Limousinen aussteigenden, steht Regisseur Yuval Sharon. Er hat genau das unberechenbare Abenteuer geschaffen, das für ihn der Reiz an Oper ist. Leicht benommen setzen die Zuschauer im Geist die Geschichte zusammen. Im Moment wirkt alles noch wie ein Traum.

Link: http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/oper-hopscotch-verwirrende-reise-in-der-limo-durch-la.807.de.html?dram:article_id=335676

Deutschlandradio Kultur

November 2, 2015

Die fahrende Oper

By Von Kerstin Zilm



Ein Kind spielt im Innenhof das Hüpfspiel "Himmel und Hölle" (Hopscotch). (picture alliance / dpa / Fredrik von Erichsen)

Inspiriert wurde Yuval Sharon vom Orpheus-Mythos. Hinter verdunkelten Scheiben von 24 Luxuskarossen lässt er eine Oper abspielen - eine mobile Oper: "Hopscotch" ist das amerikanische Wort für das Hüpfspiel "Himmel und Hölle".

Vier Tage vor der Aufführung bekommen wir Zuschauer via E-Mail eine Adresse zugeschickt. Und eine Zeit, zu der wir uns dort pünktlich einfinden müssen. Ich soll um 14:45 Uhr in der 3rd Street in Downtown Los Angeles sein, Hausnummer 310.

Dort erklärt Vrenda - ganz in schwarz mit weißen Handschuhen - die Regeln der mobilen Oper Hopscotch. Zwei andere Zuschauer und ich hören aufmerksam zu: Beim Umsteigen bitte keine Gegenstände zurücklassen. In den Limousinen nicht filmen und ansonsten den Zeichen der weiß behandschuhten Anweiser folgen. Das war's.

Ein Schauspieler in weißem Doktorkittel leitet uns aus dem hellem Licht und dem Gewimmel des Bürgersteigs zur dunklen Limousine am Straßenrand. Drinnen: Ledersitze, lila Licht, ein Smartphone an der verdunkelten Scheibe, der Aufnahmebutton leuchtet rot. Wir werden gefilmt.

Zum Anfassen nah sitzt ein Sänger, ebenfalls in weißem Kittel. Er schaut uns direkt in die Augen. Die Fahrt geht los. Und er beginnt zu singen.

Glasfassaden, Baustellen, Straßencafes und der blaue Himmel zwischen Wolkenkratzern werden zur Kulisse. Die Karosse dämpft Geräusche von Passanten an Handys, Autos und rufenden Straßenhändlern.

Bevor wir uns bequem einrichten hält die Limousine, die Tür geht auf, der Sänger rennt weg und ein schwarz gekleideter Mann mit weißen Handschuhen weist auf den Seiteneingang eines alten Theaters. Er drückt einem Zuschauer eine Kamera in die Hand. Alles, was er filmt wird sofort in die Opern-Zentrale übertragen. Das Publikum dort verfolgt live, was wir und die anderen Zuschauer, die mit Limousinen unterwegs sind, erleben.

Eine Sängerin in gelbem Sommerkleid geht die Stufen hinauf zur Empore. Weiße Handschuhe fordern uns auf, ihr zu folgen. Wir blicken hinab auf den leeren Zuschauerraum und die Bühne: dort steht ein griechischer Gott in goldenem Gewand und singt. Eine erste Orpheus- und Eurydike-Metapher.

Fünf Minuten später. Die Handschuhe leiten zu einer Seitentür – zur Feuertreppe.

Limousine öffnet sich wie von Geisterhand

Unsere Opern-Tour geht weiter. In der nächsten Limousine öffnet sich plötzlich wie von Geisterhand ein Fenster und wir sehen Projektionen auf einer Tunnelwand: ein galoppierendes Reh, ein Motorradfahrer.

Wir halten, gehen über leere Bürgersteige zu Trapezkünstlern in einer Lagerhalle voller Nebelschwaden, landen später in einem knatternden Fahrstuhl und einem mehrstöckigen Art-Deco-Labyrinth.

Unterwegs winden sich mal Sopranistinnen zwischen uns im engen Limousineninnern, mal trällert ein Akkordeonspieler Liebesmelodien. Wir Zuschauer sind begeistert von der Flut der Metaphern von Träumen, Liebe und Verlust. Aber auch verwirrt.

Dann schließlich die Ankunft im großen Finale in der Opern-Zentrale.

In einer Konstruktion aus Holz und Zeltstoff kommen Zuschauer, Limousinen, Tänzer und Sänger zusammen. Wir sind etwa 300 Menschen, verbunden dadurch, dass wir uns 90 Minuten lang ziellos auf eine unsichere Reise begeben haben und so auch unsere Umgebung ganz neu wahrgenommen haben. Unterwegs sind wir alle auf den Arzt, den Gott, das Reh, Trapezkünstler und Akkordeonspieler getroffen. Haben Arien, Rezitationen und Tanz erfahren. Von all dem laufen jetzt Filmaufnahmen über unseren Köpfen – gespickt mit Metaphern der Sage um Orpheus und Eurydike. Dazwischen steht Regisseur Yuval Sharon, glücklich lächelnd. Er spürt wie verwirrt wir sind, wollte dieses ziellose Chaos.

"Soviel könnte Amok gehen. Das lädt das Chaos ein, aber das Chaos ist auch das Leben. Und dass wir eine sehr gut geprobte Linie durch dieses Chaos aufführen können finde ich sehr schön. Es gibt keine Zeit für Angst, man muss es einfach tun!"

Leicht benommen versuchen wir Zuschauer aus all den Bildern im Kopf die alte Geschichte zusammenzusetzen. Im Moment aber wirkt alles noch wie ein Traum.

MEHR ZUM THEMA

John Adams Oper "Doctor Atomic" - Bombenstimmung in Los Alamos
(Deutschlandfunk, Kultur heute, 26.01.2014)

Link: http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/hopscotch-in-l-a-die-fahrende-oper.2165.de.html?dram:article_id=335611

November 9, 2015

«Hopscotch» in Los Angeles: eine Oper in 24 Limousinen

By Kerstin Zilm

Avantgarde-Regisseur Yuval Sharon sprengt Grenzen: In seiner neusten Oper «Hopscotch» spielen 24 Szenen abwechselnd auf engstem Raum in Limousinen und im weiten, öffentlichen von Los Angeles. Da kann bei jedem Ortswechsel etwas schief gehen.



Zuschauer erfahren vier Tage vor der Aufführung, wann und wo sie sich für das Opernexperiment «Hopscotch» einfinden müssen. Wer zu spät kommt, verpasst die Inszenierung. Was unterwegs geschieht und wohin die Reise führt, ist eine Überraschung. Beispiel «Gelbe Strecke»: Los geht's mitten in Downtown Los Angeles – zwischen Art-Deco-Gebäuden, Wolkenkratzern und Passanten auf engen Bürgersteigen. Am Strassenrand parkt eine schwarze Limousine mit verdunkelten Scheiben. Vier Zuschauer sinken in deren Ledersitze. Schon steigt ein Sänger ein, schaut sie kurz an, die Karosse rollt in den Verkehr, er beginnt zu singen.

Ab über die Feuerleiter

Vor den Fenstern werden Baustellen, Strassencafes und Wolkenkratzer zur Kulisse. Die Karosse dämpft Grosstadtgeräusche. Schon wenige Minuten später hält die Limousine vor einem Theater. Dort treffen die Zuschauer auf eine Sängerin und ein überraschendes Duett im leeren Zuschauerraum. Zehn Minuten später stehen sie im gleissenden Sonnenlicht und

tasten sich leicht benommen die Feuerleiter des Theaters hinunter. Dort warten schon die nächste Limousine und das nächste Abenteuer.

Yuval Sharon und seine Kompanie «The Industry» haben sich dieses Experiment ausgedacht. Sie wollen durch innovative Verknüpfung aller Opernelemente und Mediennutzung ein neues, jüngeres und nicht unbedingt hochgebildetes Publikum für das Genre begeistern.

Auf drei unterschiedliche Routen kreuz und quer durch Los Angeles erzählt «Hopscotch» eine Geschichte von Verlust, Liebe, Träumen und Unterwelt. Die Zuschauer erleben auf ihrer Reise jeweils acht Kapitel dieser Geschichte in nicht linearer Reihenfolge.

In den Limousinen hören sie Stimmen und Instrumente hautnah. Trommelwirbel, Gitarrensolo und Klagelieder kommen direkt ins Ohr. Andere Szenen spielen im öffentlichen Raum wie in leeren Lagerhallen, auf Hochhausdächern oder mitten in der Fussgängerzone von Chinatown.

Orientierungslosigkeit erwünscht

Zuschauer verlieren unterwegs die Orientierung. «Perfekt», sagt Regisseur Sharon: «So viel Unsicherheit wie möglich ist eigentlich das Ziel. Sobald man unsicher ist, beobachtet man alles mit ganz anderen Augen und mit ganz anderen Ohren. Und dann sieht man die Stadt hoffentlich so, wie man sie nie vorher gesehen hat.»

Wenn zum Finale die Limousinen in den «Central Hub», die «Hopscotch»-Zentrale einrollen, erwartet die Zuschauer eine traumartige letzte Sequenz. Alle Darsteller und Musiker finden sich ein, bewegen sich singend zu ätherischer Musik. Auf Bildschirmen über ihnen laufen Filmaufnahmen - Live-Aufzeichnungen von allen Strecken. Benommen versuchen die Zuschauer das Erlebte zu einer Geschichte zusammenzusetzen.

Zwischen ihnen steht glücklich lächelnd Regisseur Yuval Sharon. «Soviel könnte schief laufen. Dazu lädt das Chaos ein, aber das Chaos ist auch das Leben. Alle, die mitmachen, sind so mutig. Da ist keine Zeit für Angst!»

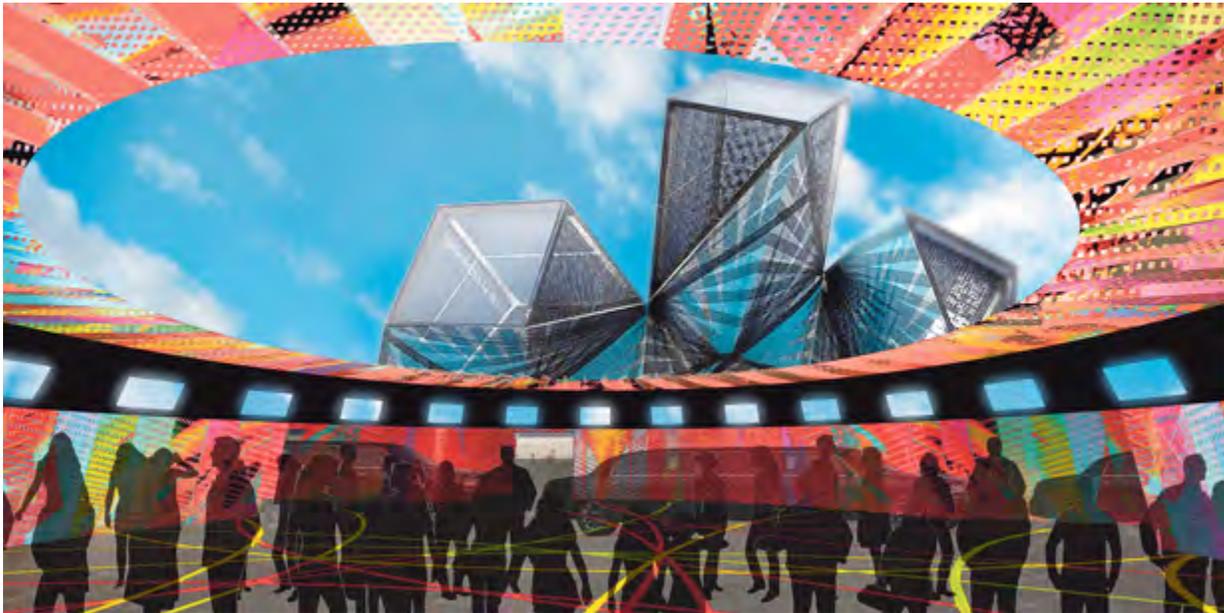
Link: <http://www.srf.ch/kultur/buehne/hopscotch-in-los-angeles-eine-oper-in-24-limousinen>

TODAY'S ZAMAN

November 29, 2015

'Hopscotch': a mobile opera on the streets of LA

By Alexandra Ivanoff



The concept of “opera” has just been reinvented.

No longer the formal musical operation confined to a single proscenium venue, it has become a mobile, digitally engineered and live-stream fed performance that promises to revolutionize the medium.

Los Angeles-based The Industry is the purveyor of this new fusion of singers, composers, actors, instrumentalists and cutting-edge video technology. Their latest production, “Hopscotch,” held on weekends between Oct. 31 and Nov. 22, also starred the city of Los Angeles, since it was broadcast live and simultaneously from 15 different locations there.

“Hopscotch” also reflects Los Angeles' car-filled environment: Not only does that city's sprawling highway system become the opera's massive mise-en-scène, but the work is performed in 24 limousines and the plot starts with a highway accident and continues with the main character's memory of her parents' death in a car crash. The program booklet's introduction gave these facts: “There are more automobiles than people in the city of Los Angeles ... [where there is] the largest system of roadways in the country: more than 7,300 miles in total.” The production is billed as “a mobile opera for 24 cars.”

The Industry's innovations

Founded by artistic director Yuval Sharon, The Industry debuted with its 2012 premiere of “Crescent City,” a large-scale, interdisciplinary opera by Anne LeBaron and Douglas Kearney. That production's blend of visual artistry and musical ingenuity established The Industry as a fresh-faced innovative force in American -- and specifically Los Angeles -- opera.

Two more productions followed, the second, “Invisible Cities,” was staged in Los Angeles Union Station. An operatic adaptation of Italo Calvino's novel by composer Christopher Cerrone, it was a collaboration with the L.A. Dance Project and introduced the use of Sennheiser wireless headphones.

“Hopscotch” lived up to its name in the fact that the 90-minute piece was divided into 36 chapters, each live-streamed onto viewing screens in the Central Hub (a temporary circular tent-like structure in downtown LA). The viewers in the Hub, each wearing Sennheiser earphones, could hop around the screens in a nonlinear fashion to piece together the story sequence or enjoy any scene by itself. The live performances took place in the cars with audience members in the vehicles with the performers. The cars zig-zagged around LA's parks, public buildings, homes, trailers, inner city streets, theatres and the banks of the Los Angeles River. Three basic city routes were color-coded for the viewers at the Hub to follow on the screens.

Another Industry feature of “Hopscotch” that differed from traditional opera was its roster of six principal composers, six text authors (for English and Spanish) and six animators whose contributions created a kaleidoscope of musical, visual and textual styles. The texts for monologues, dialogues, captions and poems contributed a novel-like quality to the story, which involved three characters that lived a modern version of the Orpheus tale. The main character, Lucha, is embodied by 19 women who sing that role in a yellow dress which symbolizes her Mexican heritage.

Composers David Rosenboom, Andrew Norman, Ellen Reid, Andrew McIntosh, Veronika Krausas and Marc Lowenstein (The Industry's music director) provided scores for what director Sharon calls “collaborative creation” in his explanation of The Industry's process.

“Even in a lot of contemporary opera,” he said in the program's printed interview, “there is the single voice that matters most: the composer. ... I think the most exciting aspect of opera is its possibility for plurality ... a diversity of independent but interlocking expressions. Layering. It's the artistic principle I've been pursuing in all these projects for The Industry, and in this piece more than any other.”

However, that inspired layering process, albeit non-sequential by design, didn't feed the audience some critical guideposts along the way. The printed matter for Central Hub listeners (other than the pricey program book) didn't offer any plot or character clues for a complicated story with mercurial twists. The Hub screens' individual music tracks frequently bled into each other, preventing the audio separation of each performance, not unlike the experience of walking down the corridor in a music conservatory. Nor was there any identification of the superb singers who did a yeoman's job on challenging scores -- and who sang them several times a day.

Superb singers and musicians

The vast number of musical artists was too numerous to list here, but the singers, particularly the females, were outstanding, secure in the many high-range demands and able to produce ample amounts of tonal allure.

Chapter 24, titled “The Red Notebook,” with music by McIntosh and text by Sarah LaBrie, was the only video that showed just text on the screen. McIntosh's score with soaring vocal lines, sumptuously sung by soprano Esteli Gomez, stands out as a splendid opus that could easily be excerpted for concerts. Chapter 15, “A Fortune,” with music by Krausas and text by Tom Jacobson, featured Julia Aks and Justine Aronson as a fortune teller and Lucha, respectively, were standouts in a colorful vignette set in a public square.

Chapter 26, “Hades,” with music by Rosenboom and text by Erin Young, is an adventure where Lucha (sung by Rebekah Barton) sings arias standing up in a convertible as it drives into the hills.

“Cars can make LA feel so lonely,” says Sharon in the interview. “The project began as an exploration of how cars can alter our perception of our city and ourselves.” In this regard, “Hopscotch” is the quintessential opera for Los Angeles. The work's surreal, spacious and loosely connected nature mirrors the city's essence and can be considered a cultural marker of 21st century West Coast consciousness.

Link: http://www.todayszaman.com/arts-culture_hopscotch-a-mobile-opera-on-the-streets-of-la_405594.html



November 20, 2015

#EXPERIENCIAS

THE INDUSTRY, OPERAS TO CORTAZARIAN

Imagine an opera happens in the street outside the theaters, where tuxedos are changed to jeans, the music is complemented by the horns of cars in traffic and history can be experienced in different ways each time enjoys production; Impossible not?

Contrary to the established canon, and what we might think, the director and producer Yuval Sharon decided to radically change how we perceive gender and founded The Industry: an independent company with the artists at the center that blends contemporary choreography, technology and daring locations to offer exhilarating experiences in Los Angeles, California.

The Industry Productions stormed the classic scene in 2012 with Crescent City, telling the story of a city devastated by a hurricane, reminding us of the tragedy of New Orleans. Later the company received international recognition in 2013 presenting Invisible Cities where Union Station became the stage for a fantastic work of other worlds based on the work of Italo Calvino.

His most ambitious project so far has been Hopscotch, who took the idea of the novel by Julio Cortazar, Hopscotch, creates a magnificent work with 24 limousines and ways of living, more than 100 artists and full angelina city as a backdrop. The audience is transported through alternate routes, visiting landmarks such as the Bradbury Building and observing how the same story is told by different artists and composers.

All routes converge at the HUB, a structure made by the Southern California Institute of Architecture with digital screens showing live what each group of artists and spectators has lived along the journey, closing with an epic musical representation with all artists on stage. History, in this disruptive expression of a classic genre, makes us rethink living in the city, the role of the cars as insulating elements of reality and loss of self in their passions, from work to love.

Do not miss again this and other cultural events in Panama or the world; contact your [Lifestyle Manager](#) to discover and enjoy together innovative artistic representations of their delight.

Link: <http://quintessentially.com.pa/experiencias-the-industry-operas-a-la-cortazariana/>

REVIEWS

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

November 11, 2015

'Hopscotch, a Mobile Opera in 24 Cars' Review

Unconventional in more ways than one, a new show takes place in cars and undisclosed locations around Los Angeles.

By Heidi Waleson



The story's 24 chapters occur simultaneously across the city. PHOTO: CASEY KRINGLEN

Who says that opera has to take place in an opera house, with a few thousand people gathered to watch the same event? “Hopscotch, a Mobile Opera in 24 Cars” the brainchild of director Yuval Sharon, founder of the Industry, a Los Angeles-based indie opera company, happens in moving cars and in different, undisclosed locations around the city. Twenty-four 10-minute chapters of the story occur simultaneously, and it is the audience—in groups of four—that moves from car to car (actually limousines), and from place to place, watching fragments of the tale unfold. The order is not chronological, and it is impossible to get the full story in a single performance since each of the three 90-minute routes, each in a different part of LA, covers only eight chapters. You can read the synopsis and watch ten imaginatively animated expository chapters online in advance, but nothing really prepares you for the dislocation and intimacy of the experience.

The basic concept comes from the experimental Julio Cortázar novel, “Hopscotch” (1963), but Mr. Sharon’s story is original. Lucha, a puppeteer, and Jameson, a scientist, meet when her car crashes into his motorcycle. They fall in love and marry. Jameson disappears, and Lucha seeks

him in vain. Meanwhile Orlando, Lucha's artistic partner (and fellow Mexican immigrant), has his own sorrows: His wife dies, and he declares his love to Lucha, who rejects him. He goes to Paris and, after many years, returns to Lucha; they are now ready for each other. Elements of the supernatural, and the breaking of the ordinary space-time continuum, are also in play.

But as you take the journey, dipping into the story at different points, the experience is atmospheric rather than narrative, with each chapter a surprise and a plunge into the emotional character of the moment. The episodes can be expansive, like the haunting "Chapter 31: Orfeo," with music by Marc Lowenstein, which takes place in the ornate old Million Dollar Theater downtown. There we follow Lucha to the highest tier, where she sings a counterpoint melody to the Italian lament of Orfeo, who is on the stage far below, accompanied only by a ghost light and an unseen violin. Other chapters are almost unbearably claustrophobic. "Chapter 24: The Red Notebook" occurs in a dark limousine with blacked-out windows, the only light coming from two glowing red books, as a high soprano on a recording sings words that are difficult to make out (the music is by Andrew McIntosh).

And when the audience shares the enclosed space in the limo with a singer and an instrumentalist, or several, it creates an enforced intimacy that can feel voyeuristic, as in "Chapter 12: Wedding" (music by Mr. McIntosh). When the newly wed Jameson turns away from Lucha to stare out the window and sing a musing aria about space and time, you realize how disturbed he is.

Ten composers and six writers collaborated on the piece, and on the two routes that I saw, Yellow and Red, plus two episodes of Green, the music had a dreamy character that fit with the story's hallucinatory quality. The Orpheus myth, and its theme of passing in and out of alternate, simultaneous realities, is referenced often, and bits of the Monteverdi opera are buried in some of the music. At times, the vocal writing can feel meandering, and the more dramatically written episodes make a welcome change. Ellen Reid's music for "Chapter 22: Despair," with two Luchas clashing harmonically in their anguish over Jameson's disappearance, along with three trumpets wailing outside the car, was explosive; Michelle Shocked's folk-tinged duet for "Chapter 28: Lucha and Orlando in Love," with Orlando playing the accordion, had a joyous, grown-up serenity.

"Hopscotch" is full of surprises, from its unusual locations, like the shore of the rushing Los Angeles River, where Lucha challenges Charon and a trio of Furies in "Chapter 26: Hades," to the dizzying number of Luchas, Orlandos and Jamesons (there are over 120 performers), to the live streaming of each chapter back to the program's Central Hub, in a structure set up in a parking lot in the Arts District, where those who can't get a ticket to the sold-out shows can don headphones and watch as the episodes unfold simultaneously on a circle of 24 televisions. It is a masterpiece of logistics and a remarkable fusion of variety and consistency. Mr. Sharon directed all the chapters; his team included production designer Jason H. Thompson, music director Marc Lowenstein, costume designers Ann Closs-Farley and Kate Bergh, and executive producer Elizabeth Cline.

But there's even more to it. Driving along in a car with a man mourning his dead wife, accompanied by two violas ("Chapter 17: Orlando's Farewell") makes you suddenly, physically

conscious of all the lives and sorrows and joys going on in all those cars driving past on the freeway all the time. Mr. Sharon has broken the fourth wall with a vengeance, not merely freeing opera from the opera house, but making its heightened expression the sound of real, everyday and inner life.

Link: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/hopscotch-a-mobile-opera-in-24-cars-review-1447279539?cb=logged0.5062645138241351>



October 26, 2015

BWW Review: Technical Wizardry Transforms the Streets of L.A. During HOPSCOTCH, a World Premiere Mobile Opera Experience

By Shari Barrett

I discovered the most amazing production company in Los Angeles two years ago at Union Station when I experienced INVISIBLE CITIES by The Industry, directed by the brilliant Yuval Sharon with his incredibly dedicated and ultra creative production team that devised a way to move among cast members and strangers as you listened to a full opera over headphones. How could they top that? Trust me, they have!

HOPSCOTCH is a new mobile opera performed in limos on three different routes (Red, Yellow or Green) at various points in and near downtown Los Angeles, presented by the Industry, directed by the amazing Yuval Sharon and his incredible production team comprised of composers, singers, musicians, sound engineers, technical wizards, and an extensive support system, all of whom have created a theatrical experience that defies description and will blow your mind.

The basic storyline concerns three people (Lucha, Jameson and Orlando), showing how their lives intersect on the streets and with the people of Los Angeles. The tale is comprised of 24 separate scenes at different locations as well as 10 animated episodes that can be viewed online before you start your journey, which definitely assist in explaining the necessary basics of the plot. But let all of that go once you step into your assigned limo and just allow the marvels you are about to experience rock your world.

I attended a preview performance on 10-24-15, and like all audience members, was sent the location of where my journey would begin just a few days prior. Imagine my surprise when I arrived to find a limo waiting, parked near graffiti-covered warehouses on a side street under a concrete bridge for the Metro Gold Line. This was the starting point of my journey along the Green Route which took me to Chinatown, the heights of Elysian Park, and winding around streets, through neighborhoods and along rivers I never knew existed. And all the while, Lucha and Jameson were ever present in one way or another, together and separately, with or without other people, singers, and musicians.

There will always be at least one character singing in the limo with you as you move from scene to scene. And while there is an accompanying musician, the sound system within allows you to hear much more, all perfectly in sync. For instance, one episode I experienced was "Passengers" which began as we entered a limo with a businessman seated inside, singing about his travels from Pasadena to downtown, accompanied by six recorded musicians. From out of nowhere, Jameson appeared riding his motorcycle behind and next to our limo as we weaved through traffic. The two men then carried on a singing conversation that began with a bad taillight warning and progressed to the exchange of a very important journal. All the while, the two men sang in perfect unison even though Jameson was riding a motorcycle in full helmet. How could we possibly be hearing him and such marvelous music, as well as dialogue, so clearly? Technical wizardry is my only answer.

Just prior to that scene, we were driven to the top of Elysian Park where we were escorted into a large, silver trailer. Once the four of us were inside, we were joined by two musicians playing the bass and tuba. In a trailer? Absolutely! And they were accompanying two characters dressed 50's style, she at the sink preparing celery for soup and he sitting at the booth in back reading a book. But when he opened the blinds, we were being taken through a car wash projected on a screen where the window would be. And all the while, beautiful singing, music and more technical wizardry surrounded us.

And then there was "Hades" with Lucha climbing down to Jameson on the edge of the River Styx, then climbing back up and into the back of our Jeep, standing and singing as the wind whipped through her yellow dress and hair as we were driven down a dusty dirt road to the next awaiting limo. How was all that glorious music able to be heard? I just stopped wondering and enjoyed every single moment.

I am sure if I had been able to talk to anyone else on one of the other routes, their journeys would have been just as amazing and awe-inspiring. Then I discovered there is a way to do just that. There is a Central Hub where you can go FOR FREE during performances, listening to every one of the 24 scenes being performed live thanks to the handheld video cameras given to audience or cast members at each location. Headphones are provided beginning at 12:30pm each day, allowing those inside the Central Hub to watch and hear whichever of the episodes catches their attention, with each scene repeated 8 times as the limos tour around the routes during each session (10:45, 12:45, 2:45 start times). And at 4:30pm, the Grand Finale takes place at the Hub where many of the limos appear allowing singers and musicians to converge. I definitely plan to be there soon to experience all of that!

For more information about HOPSCOTCH, to view online animated episodes and read more about what scenes you will see along the various routes in any of the 24 limos, or to order your tickets (limit 4 per order), visit www.hopscotchopera.com. Be forewarned, most of the performances through November 15 are SOLD OUT, so don't wait! Individual tickets on all routes begin at \$125, with weekly lotteries taking place online for \$25 tickets. Or you can see all the episodes recorded live for FREE at the Central Hub at Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc), 350 Merrick Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013, HOPSCOTCH performances take place and the Central Hub is open Saturdays and Sundays, October 31 - November 15, 2015 from 12:30pm - 5pm only.

And be prepared to be amazed by the incredible assemblage of technological wizardry thanks to everyone involved with this spectacular production by The Industry, directed by Yuval Sharon, with sound experience by Sennheiser.

Link: <http://www.broadwayworld.com/los-angeles/article/BWW-Review-Technical-Wizardry-Transforms-the-Streets-of-LA-During-HOPSCOTCH-a-World-Premiere-Mobile-Opera-Experience-20151026>



November 4, 2015

Cruise The Streets Of L.A. In 'Hopscotch,' An Opera Performed In Limos

By Lyle Zimskind



The Industry's 'Hopscotch' is an unusually moving operatic presentation

In three morning and afternoon performances, the hyper-experimental Industry Opera company premiered its audacious production of *Hopscotch* on Saturday in 24 limousines driving segments of three discrete circuits along the streets of Boyle Heights, Chinatown and the downtown Arts District.

Hopscotch is the Industry's third [full production](#) helmed by company artistic director Yuval Sharon since its inception a few years ago. The most distinctive feature that these three shows have had in common is that they have all taken place simultaneously in different spaces so that no individual audience member could see more than part of the whole live performance going on.

At the beginning of each *Hopscotch* performance, 24 groups of four audience members meet at different pre-assigned locations in downtown L.A. and enter separate stretch limousines for the beginning of their own distinctive production experience, which unfolds in eight specific 10-minute "chapters." Some of these are performed inside the limo, some outside its windows, others still in various unexpected locations where the passengers exit their vehicles. At the end of each chapter performance the group of four audience members who just watched it is picked up by another limo and whisked away for the next installment as a new spectator quartet pulls up at the curb to take their place.

A single performance ticket lets the audience member experience eight of the 24 total live chapters in *Hopscotch* (10 additional, animated segments can be viewed [online](#)) in non-linear order along one of three routes (designated red, green and yellow). Viewed in numerical sequence, the chapters do collectively relate a narrative [story](#)—but no one can view all the chapters in their numerical sequence (and one of them is missing altogether). Along the red route we took, for example, Chapter 24 was followed by Chapter 32, then 17, then 2, 14 and so on. At the production's "[Central Hub](#)," a temporary circular outdoor structure in the Arts District, anyone can drop in for free during a performance and watch any or all of the live 24 chapter segments on separate video streams with [headphones](#), but that particular experience is more chaotic than clarifying. Better just to accept that a full experiential overview of *Hopscotch* is essentially unattainable and engage with the disjointed fragments available in limited context as you go along for the ride—an experience perhaps not unlike our individual journeys through life.

And the ride really is enjoyable. Beyond the logistical excitement of being transported (literally) from scene to scene in one limo after another around the downtown L.A. area, many of the individual chapter experiences (at least along the red route, which we can vouch for) are viscerally memorable. Our own small group's trajectory began in the total darkness of a limo with blacked-out windows and ethereal piped-in music and ended in the bright light of the L.A. cityscape viewed from the roof of the Toy Factory Lofts—reached via an elevator shared with a singer, two French horn players and half a string quartet. We walked through an unfamiliar park with a young couple in the exuberance of early romantic love, and we dropped off a Dia de los Muertos death-masked figure in a cemetery. Our fellow limo passengers included a beatboxing harpist and a young woman singing in anticipation of her quinceañera. Tragedy and hope shared a single parking lot. And the astonishing 90-minute spectacle was over before we knew it.

Full-price [tickets](#) to the final weekend of Hopscotch, November 21-22, go on sale tomorrow (Thursday, November 5) at 10 a.m. There is also a special [lottery](#) for reduced-price \$25 tickets on the production website each week.

Link: http://laist.com/2015/11/04/hopscotch_opera.php

November 9, 2015

Rethinking Opera With *Hopscotch*

By Jim Farber



The three programs (Photo by Jim Farber)

The latest creation by the Los Angeles-based opera company, The Industry, *Hopscotch* may be referred to years from now as the project that redefined opera for the early 21st century.

Subtitled “A Mobile Opera in 24 Cars,” *Hopscotch* takes a brave new world perspective by deconstructing the traditional formulae of opera staging, the linear nature of storytelling, and the separation of audience and performers. It creates an immersive, participatory environment where no two people experience the opera in the same way. It incorporates state-of-the-art electronic communication and encourages audience members to share their experience (as it is happening) on social media. At the same time, it quite literally stars the city of Los Angeles and introduces audiences to a city they thought they knew.

During each performance, three audiences divided into groups of four are ushered into sleek, black limousines. From that point (in cars and on foot) they travel one of three entirely different storylines, designated Red, Yellow, or Green. Each route weaves its

way through miles of Los Angeles streets combining in-car performances with scenes in a variety of fixed locations— from rooftops and cemeteries to the banks of the Los Angeles River and the claustrophobic interior of an Airstream trailer.

The car becomes the opera's central metaphor for life in Los Angeles — a closed environment where we spend endless hours, insulated and transitory. Our world is framed by the windows of our cars, while others on the street or in their cars look back at us. So, appropriately to Los Angeles — city of freeways and 10,000 streets, the central storyline of *Hopscotch*, begins with a traffic accident.

Lucha, a young performance artist and puppeteer, inadvertently collides with a motorcyclist. His name is Jameson and he works for JPL (the Jet Propulsion Laboratory). As they exchange information, Lucha writes hers on the back of a postcard, which is also an invitation to her latest puppet show based on the myth of Orpheus. She is creating the performance with her partner, Orlando, who is something of a lost soul, haunted by the recent death of his wife.



Chapter 25: "The Other Woman," music by Veronika Krausas. Delaram Kamareh as Lucha, Brianna Seamster as Lady in Red (Photo by Jim Farber)

The opera unfolds like a cubist painting, as the ins-and-outs of this story are told in 36 individually-conceived musical chapters, but not in sequence. The effect is deliberately disorienting, to the point of feeling like a surreal dream. Each chapter is set to a libretto created by one of six different writers, the music composed by six different Los Angeles composers. There are three complete casts of singers, musicians and dancers.

Each route is different with its own set of chapters, locations, musicians, singers, and dancers. Often they are inside the limo. At other times the audience is ushered from the car to experience wandering encounters, whether it's the heroic figure of Orpheus singing on the stage of a rundown movie palace; Eurydice pining on the banks of the Los Angeles River (as a stand-in for the River Styx); a spectral Day of the Dead figure wanders through a cemetery; or following young Lucha through Mariachi Plaza in East Los Angeles aglow in her yellow quinceañera gown.

The multiple writers and composers insure multiple perspectives, with no overarching musical or verbal style, matching the fragmentary presentation. The composers — Marc Lowenstein, Andrew McIntosh, Veronika Krausas, Andrew Norman, Ellen Reid, and David Rosenboom — were given the opportunity to choose chapters that interested them, employ vastly different musical styles, as well as the option to pre-record music that would play back inside the cars (often mixing with live accompaniment) or in fixed locations. The result is an ever-flowing blend of cool post-minimalism, choral music, duets, arias, film-noir jazz, Mexican folk songs, and hard rock. There's even a piece for water-filled wine glasses and an aria accompanied on a tiny (custom made) music box.

The libretto, which is both spoken and sung (in English and Spanish), is by Tom Jacobson, Mandy Kahn, Sarah LaBrie, Jane Stephens Rosenthal, Janine Salinas Schoenberg, and Erin Young, none of whom has written specifically for opera before. Their stylistic approaches, which range from poetry and narrative, to philosophical dissertation, are as varied as the music. And while some scenes are obviously more successful than others, it is the overwhelming impact and uniqueness of Hopscotch that leaves you awestruck.

And then there is the Central Hub (created in collaboration with the Southern California School of Architecture and the audio specialists of Sennheiser). Here, for free, it's possible to watch all the chapters simultaneously on video monitors as the action is broadcast live from each car and fixed locations, with audience members often acting as videographers.

The team of creative spirits that have conceived this brave new world of opera, include The Industry's founding director, Yuval Sharon; music director Marc Lowenstein; production designer, Jason Thompson; costume designers Ann Closs-Farley and Kate Bergh; and dramaturg, Josh Raab.

Throughout, the performers, the singers, and musicians never acknowledge the presence of the audience, despite the fact that they are just inches apart. At fixed locations, the audience is guided but encouraged to view the action from any angle they please.

The logistics are incredibly complex. As one audience group gets out of a limo another group gets in. Scenes appear and disappear. The windows of the limousine become a

frame for the action outside. There are carefully planned encounters (including a duet for motorcyclist and limo passenger at 40 miles per hour) as well as any number of unpredictable, unrehearsed juxtapositions with the “real” world. And at the end of each day’s performances, the limos and the entire cast converge on the Central Hub for a grand processional finale set to the tintinnabulation of bells composed by Andrew Norman.

It is unlikely, because of its scale, that Hopscotch will ever be repeated. It is destined to fade like the dream creation that it is. But its impact may be felt for years to come as opera continues to explore new frontiers.

*Tickets are \$125 for the first two performances of the day, \$155 for the final performance, which includes the finale and performances will continue Saturday and Sunday through Nov. 22. The Central Hub is located at 350 Merrick St. in the parking lot of SCI-Arch. Performances begin at 10:45, 12:45 and 2:45. A complete synopsis of the 36 chapters, along with animations and ticket information can be found at **hopscotchopera.com**.*

Link: <https://www.sfcv.org/reviews/The-Industry/Rethinking-Opera-With-It-em-gt-Hopscotch-It-em-gt>



October 28, 2015

“Hopscotch” – a unique, mobile opera traveling through East LA – Los Angeles opera review

By Pauline Adamek

Bold, ambitious and complex. A mobile opera for passengers in 24 limousines, where you sit opposite or next to the performers *in transit*. *Hopscotch* takes mini posses of audience members on a musical tour of East L.A., offering a creative opera experience that becomes a journey with an elusive narrative and no clear destination.

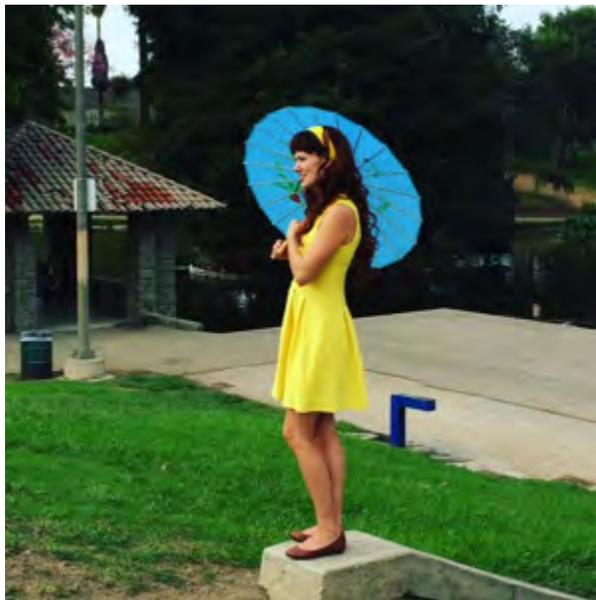


Photo by Pauline Adamek.

Firstly, this adventure is strictly for the able bodied. You have to clamber in and out of a limousine every ten or so minutes, as you and your group move from one car to a new location (such as a park or a plaza) to an different car to climb stairs to yet another location (such as a roof top), and so on. It’s a magical mystery ride, accompanied by an astonishing range of musicality, from modern opera to French horns and violin to piano accordion to Spanish guitars to sweet harp accompaniment.

Secondly, this adventure is also for the agile minded. You also have to negotiate the detailed instructions: Meet at a specified location by a specified time. As there are no bathroom facilities, you need to factor in a pit stop in *before* you get there. Because you end up at a different place to where you began, you might have to use the Luxe valet service to have them move your car, so that requires downloading an app to your phone and communicating with that independent organization. It’s all very complicated but not impossible.



Photo by Pauline Adamek.

Hopscotch is the latest project from **The Industry**, a Los Angeles-based experimental opera company lead by director Yuval Sharon. Under Sharon's inventive direction, the company is redefining the nature of the operatic art form, both for the artists and the audience.

The work is the result of a collaboration between six composers and six writers. There are 128 performers, 56 musicians, 42 singers, 24 actors, 6 dancers plus countless drivers, stage managers and technicians behind the scenes, coordinating it all to happen seamlessly. Which it does. Brilliantly.

What you experience is actually a large fragment of a whole. The opera's narrative is broken into 36 ten-minute segments, and there are three separate journeys happening concurrently, so you are never going to see the story in its entirety. Well, you can purchase a ticket to The Hub, which is the final destination for all the cars and their passengers. The show concludes with everyone converging at that place, and there are 24 video screens that have been displaying the live action in real time, so you conceivably could watch the who show there, if you have a spare six hours...



Photo by Pauline Adamek.

For each performance, the audience is split into three main groups, each traveling on a different route. (Mine was the Red Route.) Everyone has a different pick up point, where they embark upon a journey that crisscrosses with others on the same route. In fact, you might step into a limo just after four others step out.



Photo by Pauline Adamek.

So, what you experience is eight chapters from a 36-chapter story, consisting of a 90-minute experience. It's a series of fragments — songs with unclear purpose, character encounters with vague connections... The diverse music is gorgeous but the lyrics are muddy. This is very much an experience of being present, focusing on what is happening right in front of you, rather than trying to piece it together or make sense of it. You have to go with the flow.

All the limousines are different, too, which is nice. One has Maria Elena Altany as Lucha, a forlorn woman (almost all of the women wear a sunny yellow dress) singing into a rotary phone about her lost ring. Later we see a young girl celebrating her Quinceañera (young Lucha, played by Angel Ng or Natasha Sanchez) swathed in tulle clutching a ring on a chain around her neck. The most remarkable musical performance was from Phillip King, a fellow stylishly clothed in a cream-colored three piece suit, delicately plucking his diminutive harp while beat boxing and scat singing. Impressive! One limousine had blacked out windows and piped music, lit only by two concertina paper lantern "books," softly glowing red and offering a contemplative respite.

Hopscotch truly is an adventure. See this show if you can!

Approximately 90-minutes duration.

Limited run: October 31 — November 15, 2015

More information and [tickets can be found here](#).

Link: <http://www.artsbeatla.com/2015/10/hopscotch/>

Los Angeles Times

November 2, 2015

Los Angeles Times

CALENDAR

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2015 • LATIMES.COM/CALENDAR



QUAYLA BRAMBLE, above, is among the performers in "Hopscotch: A Mobile Opera for 24 Cars," a story told in numerous chapters that also has portrayals by Lauren Davis and Jessica Mirshak, top left, and flute-playing Christine Tavolacci.

OPERA REVIEW

Musical ride-along

Moving around L.A., 'Hopscotch' sometimes can transport

MARK SWED MUSIC CRITIC >>> Was it Buckminster Fuller who said that when something was supposed to be impossible, that told him what to do?

By now the opera world and a remarkably sizable segment of social and other media without the slightest interest in opera have credited director Yival Sharon — mastermind of Los Angeles' strikingly inventive opera company the Industry — with accomplishing the impossible. "Hopscotch: A Mobile Opera for 24 Cars" does, as hyped, seem to herald a transformative moment for an art form. But not the transformative one all the hype is about.

"Hopscotch" is, of course, the logical nightmare of an opera that opened on Halloween with a fleet of stretch limousines coursing through downtown, Elysian Park and Boyle Heights.

You pay your money, and you and three others hop in a limo like big shots. Singers, actors, dancers and instrumentalists are your personal performers. Scenes take place as you drive around. You get out at unexpected locations where parts of the work take place, and then you get into other limos for more in-your-face operatic encounters.

A couple of these scenes are drop-dead gorgeous. Others take your breath away for their audacity. To stand on the roof of one of those fancy new arts district apartment buildings, with stunning city and mountain views, and hear a faint trumpet playing from atop a distant tower can prove ineffably moving. To be in a limo while an actor is in earnest conversation with a motorcyclist driving alongside, thanks to the magic of wireless microphones, is

[See 'Hopscotch,' E5]

ART REVIEW

'Rain Room' taking L.A. by storm

Yet despite the run on tickets, LACMA's new toy is basically bland appointment art.

CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT
ART CRITIC

Half the fun of an actual rainstorm is that the deluge is unpredictable, a natural outburst whose duration is unknown and whose force fluctuates according to invisible conditions like wind and temperature. The "calm before the storm before the calm" injects a dimension of abstract narrative.

It tends to be messy and unruly.

In "Rain Room," the immersive installation at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art that simulates a heavy downpour, the messiness is all cleaned up — smoothed out, unruffled and neatly organized for your 15 minutes of viewing pleasure. It's a Minimalist storm. "Rain Room" performs plastic surgery on nature.

After high-profile stints in London, New York and Shanghai, the installation opened Sunday and runs for three months. The rain shower paradoxically happens indoors, inside a black-box room.

Even more unexpectedly, it keeps people who brave the storm nearly bone-dry as they venture forth into the falling rain.

[See 'Rain,' E6]

POP MUSIC REVIEW

Wet's way of making it work

A lack of theatrics marks a trio whose songs have an emotional directness.

SASHA FREEB-JONES
CRITIC AT LARGE

You pay your money and hop into a limo

['Hopscotch,' from EI] unnerving.

Not all of this is new. "Mobile opera" and "city pieces" have been around for a while. In 1999 Robert Moran's "39 Minutes for 39 Autos" transformed San Francisco into a massive performance site with 100,000 performers, and for a while staging something in a car became a Bay Area thing. Chamber Music in Historic Sites has for three decades been putting on concerts throughout L.A. in places like the Bradbury Building, for which "Hopscotch" also finds arresting use. Operas with multiple composers and librettists, like "Hopscotch," go back to the Baroque.

The frame of "Hopscotch" is a story told in 36 chapters. Most consist of live performances of scenes by six L.A. composers and six L.A. librettists that are divided along three limo routes and performed out of sequence. Ten chapters are animations with music improvised by the L.A. group gnarwhallaby. The creative team includes additional composers and writers and choreographer Danielle Agami, and it is no simple matter for the audience to piece this all together.

Sharon's inspiration is Argentine novelist Julio Cortázar's 1963 novel "Hopscotch," which has expendable chapters at the end and may be read linearly or by jumping around. The characters of "Hopscotch" are vaguely based on Cortázar's Lucha hits a motorcyclist, Jameson. He's a scientist at JPL and a cybernetic dreamer. She's involved with an avant-garde puppet troupe in East L.A. headed by the intellectual quester, Orlando, who, inspired by Cortázar's novel, goes to Paris after his wife dies. Jameson disappears; Orlando returns and ultimately marries Lucha.

These are the bones of something dizzyingly larger. The actual experience of the opera is to be lost. With each of the 90-minute limo routes (labeled Yellow, Green and Red, and each featuring music by all the composers) we visit sights of the story. Lucha and Jameson have their first kiss by the lake in Holmbeck Park, for instance, and we are there to witness it, while an ice cream vendor plays percussion. There are dozens of different Luchas,

Jamesons and Orlandos — and they can be actors, singers, instrumentalists, dancers or various combinations of them all. There are different mixtures of composers and librettists, plus the contributions of outliers.

This and the engineering feat of making it all work, which includes the contribution of impressive technology by the headphone firm Sennheiser, are all part of the cool factor that has given the opera international attention. I, however, found nothing cool about riding around in a limousine through economically disadvantaged parts of L.A. These appallingly tacky vehicles are designed to keep you far removed from your environment.

The intimacy inside is also highly artificial. Being that close to an opera singer, who is pretending to ignore you and who may not have a perfectly coordinated costume, can make the character less rather than more believable. The audience becomes awkward voyeur.

And yet for every problem "Hopscotch" creates, it finds an unexpected solution. A fortuneteller looks you straight in the eye as she sings to you, and you are part of the story. Observe a veteran opera star like mezzo-soprano Suzanna Guzmán up close, and the rest of the world simply vanishes from your consciousness.

The adventure causes music, without which there is no opera, to struggle for prominence. But when it achieves it, the sense of triumph is particularly powerful. On the Red route, for instance, composer Verónica Krauss sends Orlando to Paris with a haunting scene for the mesmerizing tenor Timur Bekbosunov, and Ellen Reid creates her wonders with the rooftop trumpet.

On the Green route, one of Andrew McIntosh's chapters involves the majesty of four saxophones on Angels Point at the top of Elysian Park, and David Rosenboom creates a vivid depiction of Hades in a lonely spot along the L.A. River. On the Yellow, Marc Lowenstein riffs on Monteverdi's "Orfeo" in the latticed splendor of the Million Dollar Theatre. Andrew Norman is responsible for the finale at the Hub, where for the late afternoon performances all routes and all performers convene in a communal moment of lush, melancholy spirituality that makes it all worthwhile.

Not all of "Hopscotch" is elitist. There are lotteries for cheap tickets, and every episode in every limo is filmed live and shown on screens at the Hub, the central headquarters for "Hopscotch" in the parking lot of the Southern California Institute of Architecture downtown, which anyone can visit for free during performances.

But none of that does what is necessary to clean up the mess of "Hopscotch," to completely counter the kind of self-involved, isn't-this-cool response that this opera can seem to be engineered to produce or to make urgent the often unintelligible libretti.

One last stage is now needed for "Hopscotch." I

never thought I'd say this, but the first epic L.A. opera requires not artificial immersive reality but virtual reality. Let the industry assemble all the episodes as transmitted to the Hub, all the animations and all the expendable material together online (or on an app or disc), and "Hopscotch" will surely and with irresistible suitability become the first exceptional hyperopera.

mark.swed@latimes.com



REBEKAH BARTON offers one of the portrayals of Lucha; Nicholas LaGesse is in the background. "Hopscotch's" scenes are divided along three limo routes.

PACIFIC THEATRES

EL CAPITAN

6352 Hollywood Blvd. at Highland
818/845-3110 Express Code - 91361

TIM BURTON'S THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS IN DISNEY DIGITAL 3D (PG) *Viewing Closed for Private Event*

CHATHSWORTH

WINNETKA STADIUM 21
Winnetka and Pacific
818/501-5121 Express Code - 095 3D

An Immersive Experience in Hand - 79 ft wall-to-wall screen
- 20% wider, heavier seats!
- Premium Sight and Sound!

NOW PLAYING IN XANAL "MOVIE EXPERIMENTS"

THE MARTIAN (PG-13) (10-40 AM, 2:35, 5:10, 8:15 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

BURRIT (R) (11:30 AM, 1:40, 4:55, 7:30, 9:25 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

FREARS OF HANDED (R) (11:30 AM, 1:40, 4:55, 7:30, 9:25 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS (R) (11:30 AM, 1:40, 4:55, 7:30, 9:25 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

DIGITAL 3D

THE MARTIAN 3D (PG-13) (11:30 AM, 2:35 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

BLACK MASS (R) (11:30 AM, 2:35 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

BRIDGE OF SPIES (PG-13) (11:30 AM, 2:35 PM, 5:10, 8:15 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

CRIMSON PEAK (R) (11:30 AM, 2:35 PM, 5:10, 8:15 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

EVEREST (PG-13) (4:25, 8:20, 10:45 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 2 (PG) (12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

THE INTERIM (PG-13) (11:30 AM, 1:40, 4:55, 7:30, 9:25 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

JEN AND THE HOLOGRAMS (PG) (1:45, 4:45 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

LADRONES (PG-13) (2:00, 7:30, 10:35 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

THE LAST WITCH HUNTER (PG-13) (12:45, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:45 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

HAZARD RUNNER: THE SCORCH TRIALS (PG-13) (1:30, 5:40, 8:25 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

PAIN (PG) (11:30 AM, 1:30, 4:40, 7:50 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

ROCK THE KASBAR (R) (2:30, 5:30 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

SKARDO (R) (11:30 AM, 2:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

STEVE JOBS (R) (11:45 AM, 2:45, 5:45, 7:45, 9:45 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

TRUTH (R) (11:45 AM, 1:30, 4:30, 7:25, 10:10 PM)
Also Showing At Herkridges Feslone Center

THE VISIT (PG-13) 8:00 PM

SHERMAN OAKS

5818 Wilshire Blvd. at Van Nuys
818/501-5121 Express Code - 382

ANT-MAN (PG-13) (4:15, 6:30 PM)

CRIMSON PEAK (R) (2:30, 4:30, 6:40 PM)

INSIDE OUT (PG) (2:45, 5:00, 7:00 PM)

JURASSIC WORLD (PG-13) (2:00, 4:25, 6:50 PM)

MURKINS (PG) (2:30 PM)

PAIN (PG) (2:15, 4:35, 6:55 PM)

GLENDALE

GLENDALE 18
The Americana at Brand
Colorado Street at Brand Blvd.
1-866-PAC-3700 Express Code - 905
4 Hours Free Validated Parking
Enter at Central Blvd. 3D

BURRIT (R) (11:30 AM, 1:40, 4:55, 7:30, 9:25 PM)

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS (R) (11:30 AM, 1:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30, 11:30 PM)

BRIDGE OF SPIES (PG-13) (11:30 AM, 2:30, 5:00, 8:00, 11:00 PM)

CRIMSON PEAK (R) (11:40 AM, 2:30, 5:00, 7:40, 10:15 PM)

GOOSEBUMPS (PG) (10:30 AM, 11:15, 12:55, 1:40, 3:15, 4:00, 5:40, 6:20, 8:05, 8:50, 10:30 PM)

HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 2 (PG) (11:30 AM, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50 PM)

THE INTERIM (PG-13) (11:35 AM, 2:20, 5:05, 7:50, 10:25 PM)

JEN AND THE HOLOGRAMS (PG) (10:35 AM, 1:25 PM)

THE LAST WITCH HUNTER (PG-13) (11:15 AM, 1:45, 4:15, 6:45, 9:15 PM)

THE MARTIAN (PG-13) (10:30 AM, 11:15, 1:35, 2:15, 4:40, 5:15, 7:45, 8:15, 10:30 PM)

HAZARD RUNNER: THE SCORCH TRIALS (PG-13) (10:45 AM, 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:45 PM)

PAIN (PG) (10:45 AM, 1:35, 4:15, 7:05, 9:40 PM)

ROCK THE KASBAR (R) (4:15, 6:45, 9:15 PM)

SKARDO (R) (10:45 AM, 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45 PM)

STEVE JOBS (R) (11:45 AM, 2:30, 5:15, 8:00, 10:45 PM)

TRUTH (R) (11:30 AM, 2:20, 5:10, 8:00, 10:50 PM)

L.A./BEVERLY HILLS

THE GROVE STADIUM 14
3rd & The Grove Drive
Just East of the Historic Farmers Market
923-620-0829 Express Code - 209
4 Hours On-Site Validated Parking Only \$2.50 3D

RESERVED SEATING NOW AVAILABLE!

BURRIT (R) (11:30 AM, 1:40, 4:55, 7:30, 9:25 PM)

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS (R) (11:30 AM, 1:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30, 11:30 PM)

BRIDGE OF SPIES (PG-13) (11:30 AM, 1:40, 4:55, 7:30, 9:25 PM)

CRIMSON PEAK (R) (11:30 AM, 1:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30, 11:30 PM)

GOOSEBUMPS (PG) (11:30 AM, 2:15, 4:40, 7:40, 9:50 PM)

HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 2 (PG) (11:30 AM, 1:30, 3:40 PM)

THE INTERIM (PG-13) (11:30 AM, 4:15, 7:10 PM)

JEN AND THE HOLOGRAMS (PG) (11:30 AM)

THE LAST WITCH HUNTER (PG-13) (11:35 AM, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40 PM)

THE MARTIAN (PG-13) (10:40 AM, 11:15, 1:35, 5:05, 8:10, 10:10, 11:30 PM)

ROCK THE KASBAR (R) (11:45 PM)

SKARDO (R) (11:15 AM, 1:45, 4:25, 7:05, 9:40 PM)

ARC LIGHT CINEMAS

all reserved seating | cafe bar | exhibits | gift shop

Select, Purchase and Print Your Tickets Online with No Added Fee
www.ArcLightCinemas.com

BEACH CITIES

Nash & Rosecrans
310/807-9855
Free Parking 3D

BURRIT (R) (11:30 AM, 1:15, 3:25, 5:35, 8:00, 10:40 PM)

HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 2 (PG) (11:30 AM, 1:30, 3:35, 5:45, 7:40, 9:40 PM)

THE INTERIM (PG-13) (11:30 AM, 1:30, 4:25, 7:10, 9:25 PM)

JEN AND THE HOLOGRAMS (PG) 5:15 PM

THE LAST WITCH HUNTER (PG-13) (11:30 AM, 1:30, 4:30, 7:15, 10:20 PM)

PAIN (PG) 9:15 PM

DIGITAL 3D

THE MARTIAN 3D (PG-13) 12:45, 4:20 PM

THE MARTIAN (PG-13) (11:15 AM, 1:30, 2:30, 3:35, 5:30, 7:45, 8:35, 9:40, 10:45 PM)

BRIDGE OF SPIES (PG-13) (11:30 AM, 1:25, 3:50, 4:40, 5:50, 7:35, 8:45, 10:15 PM)

CRIMSON PEAK (R) (11:50 AM, 2:55, 5:45, 8:15, 10:50 PM)

GOOSEBUMPS (PG) (11:30 AM, 1:40, 4:45, 6:25, 7:50, 10:15 PM)

CULVER CITY

3500 Culver Blvd. Culver City, CA 90232
(310) 559-2416
4 Hrs. Validated Parking - Free 3D

BURRIT (R) (11:30 AM, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30 PM)

CRIMSON PEAK (R) (11:30 AM, 1:45, 4:20, 7:15 PM)

CODEBOOK (R) (11:45, 2:45, 5:45, 8:45 PM)

GOOSEBUMPS (PG) (10:45, 2:15, 4:55, 5:55, 10:45 PM)

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS (R) (11:05 AM, 12:40, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50 PM)

THE LAST WITCH HUNTER (PG-13) (11:20 AM, 1:40, 3:55, 5:55, 8:15, 10:35 PM)

DIGITAL 3D

THE MARTIAN 3D (PG-13) 9:20 PM

THE MARTIAN (PG-13) (10:30, 1:30, 4:30, 7:30 PM)

BRIDGE OF SPIES (PG-13) (11:30 AM, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30 PM)

SKARDO (R) (11:40 AM, 2:45, 5:45, 8:45 PM)

STEVE JOBS (R) (11:35 AM, 2:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:45 PM)

PASADENA

Colombia & Los Robles
628/588-8888
4 Hrs. Validated Parking - 3D 3D

BURRIT (R) (11:35 AM, 1:15, 3:15, 5:05, 7:30, 9:50 PM)

GOOSEBUMPS (PG) (11:30 AM, 1:25, 3:30, 5:40, 7:10, 9:25 PM)

OUR BRAND IS CRISIS (R) (11:30 AM, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 PM)

JEN AND THE HOLOGRAMS (PG) 11:25 AM

THE LAST WITCH HUNTER (PG-13) (11:45 AM, 2:30, 5:20, 7:40, 10:20 PM)

DIGITAL 3D

THE MARTIAN 3D (PG-13) 4:15 PM

THE MARTIAN (PG-13) (11:40 AM, 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:45, 9:45, 11:30 PM)

BRIDGE OF SPIES (PG-13) (11:45 AM, 1:25, 3:35, 5:10, 5:25, 7:30, 9:15, 10:35 PM)

CRIMSON PEAK (R) (11:50 AM, 2:55, 5:20, 8:20, 10:30 PM)

SUBTRAGET (R) (11:40 AM, 1:30, 3:20, 5:10, 7:05, 9:20 PM)

SHERMAN OAKS

Ventura & Sepulveda
(818) 501-0753
4 Hrs. Validated Parking - Free 3D

BURRIT (R) (11:30 AM, 1:15, 3:15, 5:15 PM)

CRIMSON PEAK (R) (2:30, 5:45, 7:40, 11:20 PM)

HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 2 (PG) (11:30 AM, 2:25, 4:45, 7:45, 10:15 PM)

ROOM (R) (11:40 AM, 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40 PM)

THE INTERIM (PG-13) (11:30 AM, 2:00, 4:15, 6:15, 8:15, 10:15 PM)

JEN AND THE HOLOGRAMS (PG) 12:30 PM

THE LAST WITCH HUNTER (PG-13) (11:45 AM, 12:45, 3:30, 4:45, 7:20, 10:20 PM)

ROCK THE KASBAR (R) 11:30 PM

'Hopscotch'

Where: Live performances in vehicles driving three routes (meeting points given with purchase of tickets); live-streaming monitors at the Hub, in a parking lot at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, 350 Merrick St., Los Angeles

When: 10:45 a.m. 12:45 and 2:45 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays, through Nov. 15

Tickets: \$125 to \$155 for a vehicle seat (possibly sold out; check online), free admission to the Hub (limited to 180 people, first come, first served)

Info: hopscotchopera.com



November 2, 2015

Sights Pacific: Hopscotch

By Myron Meisel

Since its founding in 2010, The Industry, under the daring leadership of artistic director Yuval Sharon, has pursued a new media makeover meant to shake up not merely the Los Angeles opera world but the world at large. Its extraordinary *coup de theatre*, 2013's *Invisible Cities*, commandeered Union Station as singers and dancers and audience wandered about as alien invaders amongst the real-life travellers, apprehending the orchestral music through Sennheiser headphones.

This was a tough act to follow, but The Industry's cutting-edge identity mandates that it must top it. Sharon, trained in the world of the European avant-garde (he assisted Achim Freyer on his landmark local *Ring Cycle*), doesn't allow his high-art credentials to compromise a visionary reimagining of flamboyant showmanship for a digital age and social media temperaments. He brandishes an unerring instinct for investing a long-deemed irretrievably irrelevant art form with a dazzling array of hipness, conceptualism as experiential cool.

Everything about *Hopscotch* (inspired by but bearing no resemblance to the Julio Cortazar novel, though there are readings from Ortega y Gasset) seeks to elaborate upon the more contained inspiration of the Union Station gambit. It employs five composers (with several additional fill-ins), six writer-lyricists and an obviously very busy dramaturg. The work consists of 36 "chapters," telling a story ever so slightly suggestive of the Orpheus myth. Ten of the chapters are animations available online. Audience members, in groups of four, join singers and musicians in a series of limousines that carry them throughout neighborhoods east of the downtown Industrial District, emerging at undisclosed sites to explore parks or plazas or buildings.

There are three distinct routes, each denominated by a color (like each of L.A.'s subway lines), though even parties that simultaneously travel a common itinerary start at different locations and proceed in a different order. Moreover, each route encounters only eight of the full complement of chapters, though everyone finishes up at The Central Hub to congregate with all the artists (and ticketless viewers) for the finale. So, not only is the narrative, such as it is, non-linear, it also shuffles the sequence like a deck of cards split into three piles.

The point, naturally, is that no one's experience of the overall work will be the same. It will also vary depending on how much the occupants of your limo partake of the videotaping that is beamed back to the Hub for real-time streaming, or simply chat among themselves, or peer out the windows to get a sense of the geographic journey. Indeed, ultimately *Hopscotch* is far more intensely a theatrical experience than a musical one, since the aural materials we encounter, however deft and expressive (though unevenly comprehensible), never assert themselves decisively over the quotidian immersion of the allusive journey undertaken.

On my Red itinerary, from the rooftop pool area of an building, trailing behind leading lady Lucha (named for Mexican singer Lucha Reyes, subject of a masterful biopic by Arturo Ripstein, and here portrayed throughout by multiple sopranos) and two French horn players, one could see the L.A. Gun Club, a stray movie soundstage, and a defunct box company, while a trombone sounded from the top of the repurposed National Biscuit Company across the street, a spatial effect that would have wowed such an experimental composer as Henry Brant. We followed the central lovers with an accordionist into Hollenbeck Park, with its duck-filled pond and a bandshell where other singers are deployed, one of them on roller skates. (I couldn't help but notice official Los Angeles signs at both pool and park prohibiting defecation by humans or dogs.)

At a triggering event where Lucha crashes her car into the motorcycle of her future lover, our limo circled the scene in several 360-degree maneuvers like one of Brian De Palma's unmotivated camera gyrations, the voices amplified inside our vehicle as we watch the singers apparently lip-synching their words, the car and motorcycle evoked by wooden sculptures of rough-hewn suggestive beauty instead of custom props.

In Mariachi Plaza, we wandered in and out of Libros Schmibros. I discovered the urban sanctuary of Evergreen Cemetery, a location mysteriously new even after having lived 40 years in this city.

Logistically, it is so vast and complicated that there is marvel in the feat itself, particularly considering how challenging it is in everyday life to get most people from Point A to Point B at all, let alone on time.

Press were invited to shakedown previews, and while it was natural that the process was confusing to grasp at first, there were no apparent glitches. Save one: It requires multiple arbitrary acts of willful imagination and no little amount of hand-waving to assemble any coherent comprehension of *Hopscotch* as a musical and dramatic entity remotely related to how it has been conceived.

The creators understand this and provide ample explicatory supplemental materials to compensate for it, not least in a copious array of supporting documentation provided to spectators – documentation that's unreasonable to absorb except in retrospect, if then, or ever.

No doubt this outcome comprises the purpose of the piece: to partake collectively in an acutely individual spectacle, where resolutions are unattainable with the vagaries of obscure process being our only points of reference. Meanwhile, we explore the intricacies of "community" and seek out patterns of some newly minted connection without the gratification of any imposed certainty, or authoritative program. It achieves a relentless interpenetration of media without recourse to any palpable sense of shared contact. It is so big and elusive that we disappear within it more than it encourages us to emerge transformed.

Instead, *Hopscotch's* meta-significance may lie in its unabashed embodiment of an anti-operatic happening, shorn of opera's traditional barriers of social class and pretension (as well as a Happening's reliance on spontaneity and chance). Yet most of the various innovations can be viewed as effectively a brazen checklist of grant-magnet attributes: prolix profundities, expanding audience appeal to younger demographics, technologically savvy, community-based, environmentally grounded, academically au courant theoretical underpinnings, etc. Yet the prodigiously talented Sharon strikes me as equally a new incarnation of impresario, yet still a consummate showman, if perhaps more in the mold of Mike Todd than Sol Yurok. He and his crack collaborators deliver the goods, though it is not unreasonable to wonder about the extent of the wardrobe they wear.

In one crucial particular, The Industry cannot deliver an essential cornerstone for a true democratization of opera: a reasonable ticket price. This is too grandiose and therefore expensive an undertaking, and given the relatively few who can participate directly, it's a hot ticket that

everyone is talking about, while accommodating only a select elect. Commendably, they are doing everything possible to allow access to the extravaganza via the array of online resources, especially the animations that provide the links missing to even those who purchase the expensive tickets. And The Central Hub offers free admittance, providing headphones and those multiple simultaneous video feeds for as long or as short a time as anyone chooses, and for which, fortuitously they can show up for at any time, unlike the necessarily well-marshaled ticketholders. The 4:30 daily finale, uncharacteristically modest in its intimation of epiphany, is open to all, subject to limitations of capacity.

Lest this review seem too churlish, enough praise cannot be lavished for The Industry's ambition and its dedication to the cultivation of opera as a living, evolving art form. Its First Take presentation earlier this year of scenes from avant-garde operas in development was exciting beyond measure, and the underlying taste sophisticated and genuinely bold.

Hopscotch may jump around too much in its determination not to allow its feet to land within the squares, too diffuse musically and conceptually to coalesce effectively; still, an excess of ingenuity and enterprise remain among the most valuable of faults. Its shortcomings presage a process from which greater things might come.

For the record, the composers, all well-established ample talents with much-appreciated local Los Angeles connections, include Veronika Krausas, Marc Lowenstein (also music director), Andrew McIntosh, Andrew Norman, Ellen Reid and the venerable David Rosenboom, and the writers Tom Jacobson, Mandy Kahn, Sarah LaBrie, Jane Stephens Rosenthal, Janine Salinas Schoenberg, Erin Young. All subsumed their egos to serve the greater glory of the project, and while I heard the work of only some of them, their distinctive voices added spice and fiber to the tasting menu of the work's fragmented vision.

Link: <http://stageraw.com/2015/11/02/hopscotchp-and-steel-hammer/>



November 11, 2015

Los Angeles Opera Review: HOPSCOTCH (The Industry)

By Tony Frankel

IF STORYTELLING'S YOUR THING, SKIP *SCOTCH*

French poet and essayist Charles Pierre Péguy wrote, “It is the essence of genius to make use of the simplest ideas.” Yuval Sharon, director and creator of *Hopscotch*, “the world’s first-ever opera to take place in cars,” is the essence of genius. Only a genius of this kind could inspire six writers, six collaborators and over one hundred artists to deconstruct an original story into 36 chapters, and then have them performed simultaneously around central Los Angeles. There are 3 geographic routes with a separate admission for each. Patrons tour in their private limos to see 8 non-sequential chapters at a time—skipping forward or backward with a significance that will surely go over the viewer’s head. 10 of the chapters are animated for viewing online or at the central hub, where one can also witness live feed from the performances on monitors.



And Mr. Sharon, with the aid of angels, grants, and philanthropists, and hundreds of volunteers, limo drivers, stage managers, etc., actually pulled it off—the coordinates, that is. How amazing to get into your own posh limo with three other patrons where a musician, singer, or actor performs inches from your face. How exhilarating to get out of the car and find yourself, for example, in the middle of an East Los Angeles street fair, being whisked by a volunteer to your next car while wearing headphones listening to an actor in the crowd.

The great idea here is not the deconstructed storytelling (Pinter, anyone?); the great idea here is not the work itself (watching all 36 chapters chronologically would not make this mystifying mishmash magical); the great idea here is not the part tour / part show ([The RIDE](#) in New York has been at it for years); and the great idea here is not theater in a car (Moving Arts’ *The Car Plays* already did that).



The genius idea here is to take these other ideas and smooch them together into an event so thrilling in concept (utilizing a budget of hundreds of thousands if not a million) that the show practically sells out before it opens—even with ticket prices averaging \$125-155. (Tickets for a one-weekend extension go on sale Thursday.)

Yet while some sections positively thrill in design (never in music, which is par for the course for “new” opera—if you can call this an opera), and the overall 90-minute experience of hopping in and out of cars is more than just cool, this massive immersive theatrical event is incoherent to the point that it left me cold. All the king’s men would have better luck putting together Humpty Dumpty than you will piecing together *Hopscotch*’s storyline.



Sharon’s company, The Industry, has already produced two complex world premiere operas. Each time, the actual scoring and writing of the works played second fiddle to the event itself. [Crescent City](#), which was staged on separate art installations, and [Invisible Cities](#), which had spectators roaming among the action in Union Station, were inspiring events, but the storytelling left me indifferent. The story of *Hopscotch*—sort of a self-discovery, philosophical hooey, love-triangle thing—is constructed around Angelinos and sections of their city. The irony here is that Mr. Sharon couldn’t care a whit about storytelling as far as his audience is concerned. His main interest lies in taking a nugget of a story and turning it into one of the most logistically complicated productions on record.

This is experimental theater that is nothing more than a very expensive ride, because Mr. Sharon is *not* a genius at combining his device with intriguing storytelling. Nor is that his intention. But while our fast-paced technological world destroys storytelling, it is in our DNA. We need it. Since civilization began, Man has used storytelling for survival and instructing—entertainment was a byproduct. Here, it’s all about the million-dollar experience, one which utterly fails to move or touch us.



In my review of *Invisible Cities*, I wrote, “As breathtaking as this shebang is, I can’t help hoping that all of this interactive theater will one day offer a story that we can sink our teeth into and touches our heart. In the meantime, a cerebral blow job is nothing to scoff at.” But *Hopscotch* isn’t even a cerebral blowjob. Through no fault of the dizzying array of talent at hand, it’s artistic masturbation; and while I like to watch up close, I’d rather participate with my soul.

photos courtesy of The Industry

Hopscotch

The Industry

departure points (varying depending on route) will be sent out the Monday before that weekend’s performance
Central Hub, 960 E 3rd St

Saturdays and Sundays at 10:45am, 12:45pm, and 2:45pm
ends on November 22, 2015

for tickets, visit [The Industry](#) or [Hopscotch Opera](#)

Link: <http://www.stageandcinema.com/2015/11/11/hopscotch-the-industry/>

<https://www.sfcv.org/music-news/a-documentary-about-the-mobile-opera-hopscotch-is-coming-on-public-television>

A Documentary About the Mobile Opera *Hopscotch* Is Coming on Public Television

BY JIM FARBER,

July 12, 2016

0

0 COMMENTS



Hopscotch's Phillip King (harp), Jonah Levy (trumpet), and Delaram Kamareh | Credit: Dana Ross

Nine months ago a fleet of 24 limousines and a cast of 126 performers presented *Hopscotch*, a mobile opera that defied all the rules. Its multiple plotlines and musical encounters were, by design, presented out of sequence in a manner that was so nonlinear that every audience member experienced the piece

differently. It was so intimate that only four people at a time could travel from chapter to chapter (accompanied by the performers) along one of three entirely different routes: Red, Green and Yellow.

Hopscotch, conceived by six writers and six composers, and produced by Yuval Sharon and his company, The Industry, was as vast and varied as the landscapes and architecture that provided backdrops for the action — whether it was a cemetery in Boyle Heights, the banks of the Los Angeles River, or the cavernous derelict interior of the Million Dollar Theater.

On Tuesday, July 19, at 9 p.m., Los Angeles Public Television station KCET will present ***Hopscotch: An Opera for the 21st Century*** documenting the process of its creation and presentation. The program will also be streamed on Link TV nationwide and can be viewed on DIRECTV 375 and Dish Network 9410. Produced as part of KCET's "Artbound" series, the documentary features scenes from the opera and interviews with production staff, composers, writers, performers, and audience members.

Despite the immense complexity of *Hopscotch*, Sharon said prior to a preview screening that he never doubted that the work would be presented.

"It was always such a flexible modular idea that as soon as one piece would be drawn out of it, there would be another avenue we could take, quite literally. If we couldn't drive down one street, we took the next one over. If there was a site we wanted to activate and we couldn't (Dodger Stadium was a big loss) we chose another one. The scale may have been shrinking and expanding, but we always knew we were going to find a way to make this happen."

For Sharon, *Hopscotch* was an opera of surprise, where, in the best John Cage tradition, anything could happen.

"We wanted to show people that an environment they drive through day in and day out could be the site for surprise and possibility. By weaving through the diverse segments of LA and working with artists from every cultural background, what we wanted to do was not just create an opera, but in a way create a microcosm of Los Angeles."

A studio recording of Hopscotch featuring the music of Veronika Krausas, Marc Lowenstein, Andrew McIntosh, Andrew Norman, Ellen Reid, and David Rosenboom will be released in January.

Read more about Hopscotch at the [opera's website](#). Read a [review of Hopscotch](#).

<https://www.sfcv.org/music-news/a-documentary-about-the-mobile-opera-hopscotch-is-coming-on-public-television>

OPERA NEWS

EXCLUSIVE

*Beth Morrison's
New Rules*

p.32



YOUR
BACKSTAGE
PASS



Game CHANGERS

Young companies are redefining opera.

BY MATTHEW SIGMAN, p.26

August 2016

\$5.99 US/\$6.99 CAN

**THE INDUSTRY TAKES
L.A. ON A ROAD TRIP** p.16



www.operanews.com



The Central Hub, lower right, on Merrick Street in Los Angeles, where audiences could view all three routes of Hopscotch simultaneously

On the Road with *The Industry.*

Los Angeles's **avant-garde opera company** thinks outside the proscenium.



▶ **IN A CITY WHERE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION** is an afterthought and a gathering of food trucks is a culinary event, an opera on wheels seemed almost inevitable. When it did occur, in autumn 2015, director Yuval Sharon stuck wisely to the surface streets.

As the founder of Los Angeles's experimental opera company The Industry, Sharon is no newcomer to opera outside the box; in 2013, he drew the attention of L.A. audiences—as well as Metro transit riders—with his avant-garde production of composer Christopher Cerrone's adaptation of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, a twenty-one performance run that took place inside L.A.'s Union Station.

The oblique quality of Calvino's work holds much appeal for Sharon. Bringing the work to life in the most public of spaces, a roving cast of performers moved disparately about the station, engendering curious stares from the uninitiated. For those in the know—headphone-wearing patrons experiencing the opera's remotely performed live score—*Cities* was, in Sharon's words, “a blurring of the line between everyday life and art.”

Sharon took inspiration for his car opera, *Hopscotch*, from Julio Cortázar's 1963 surrealist novel of the same name. “You can jump around the book and experience it in a nonlinear order,” Sharon

formed three times—once on each of three color-coded routes—and to witness nineteen different performers embodying Lucha, the opera's heroine. Adding another layer of complexity were the audience members themselves, some of whom, armed with specially equipped smartphones, shooting as they chose, live-streamed portions of the work to a “central hub,” open to the public, where performances across all three routes could be viewed simultaneously.



“*Hopscotch* was very much about the ride.” —SHARON

says. “The Cortázar estate, ultimately, did not allow us to adapt the work, which was the greatest thing that could've happened for the project.” Instead, Sharon preserved only the format and title, reimagining *Hopscotch* as a “mobile opera.”

To experience the entirety

Upon arrival at each route's starting point, ticketholders boarded limousines along with the *Hopscotch* cast members, who delivered much of their performances en route, only inches away from their audience, creating a level of immersion rarely seen in traditional theater. Both performers and audience mem-

bers changed cars multiple times, stepping outside at points to have portions of the work performed in public spaces—a city park, a rooftop, a downtown bookstore, a parking lot.

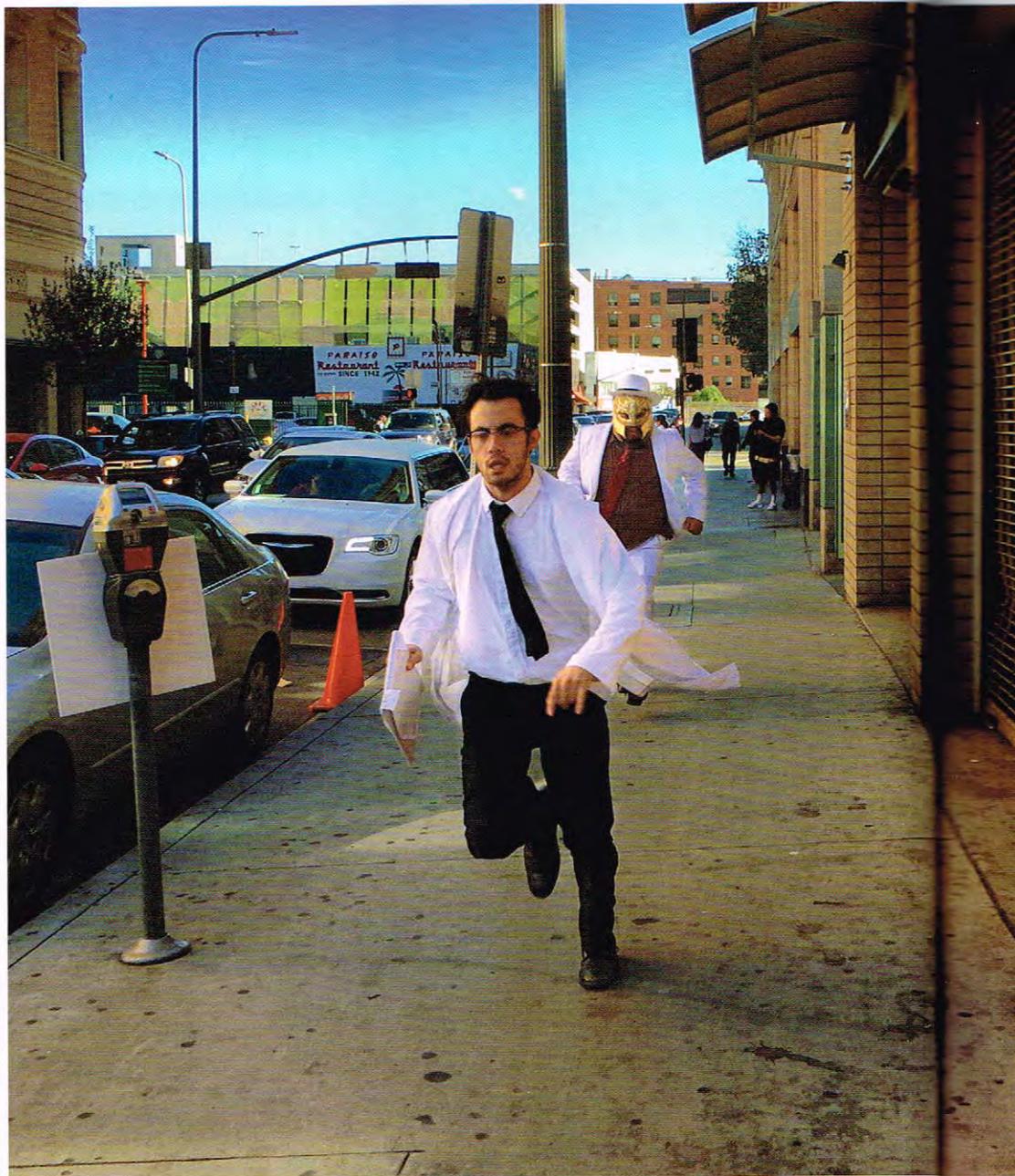
More than 9,000 people saw *Hopscotch* during its thirty-six performances, with 3,200 ticketholders inside the limousines and nearly 6,000 more viewers observing the production remotely, free of charge, from the hub. Four preview days, beginning October 4, were followed by eight weekend performance days, spanning October 31 to November 22, with three groups of performances held daily, across all three of the opera's routes.

"The audience member has to take a leap of faith," says Sharon. "You don't know anything but your starting point, and you get taken on a ride. I think that's where the most interesting art happens—outside the comfort zone."

Though Sharon is well into the planning of his next major Industry production—Brecht's *Life of Galileo*, to be staged in autumn 2017 around a bonfire on the beach in Santa Monica—he still speaks of *Hopscotch* with laser specificity. He sees it as a work rich in metaphors, with hints toward the direction of opera's future. "It was very much about the ride, and not about knowing where you're going," he says. "In life, we try to lay as good a groundwork as we can, but things come out of left field and force us to reroute."

Despite *Hopscotch's* unconventional nature, its artistic team was well rooted in opera tradition. "I like working with composers who have a knowledge of opera," says Sharon. "The composers whose reference points are purely the musical-theater stage, they don't have the depth of perspective that comes from the classical world."

Six composers—Veronika Krausas, Marc Lowenstein,



A scene from one of the twenty-four live chapters of *Hopscotch*

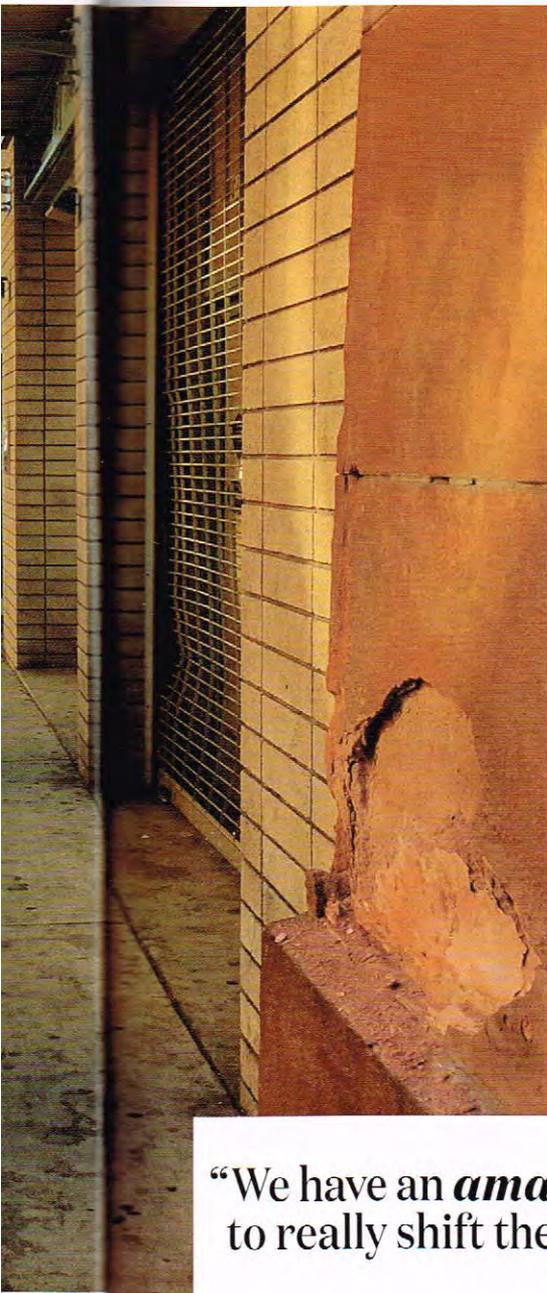
Andrew McIntosh, Andrew Norman, Ellen Reid and David Rosenboom—were engaged to create the whole of the *Hopscotch* score across multiple routes. Their combined credits include works for the Berlin, New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, as well as New York City Opera. (*Invisible Cities's* sole composer, Cerrone, was a 2015 recipient of the Rome Prize who has been commis-

sioned by both the L.A. Philharmonic and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.) "Another thing that's very exciting about what the Industry is doing is that it's a lot of young composers who are coming to opera very fresh."

Sharon's route to opera feels as nonlinear as many of his works. A Chicago native whose earliest opera experiences were traditional stagings at that city's

PREVIOUS SPREAD: © JOSHUA LIPTON (BOTH)

THIS SPREAD: © CASEY KRINGLER (BOTH)



“We have an *amazing opportunity* to really shift the needle.” —SHARON

Lyric Opera, Sharon was slow to warm to the form. Yet a flair for the dramatic arts, coupled with a Wagner-loving father, eventually had their effect on Sharon, who assisted on several productions in Germany and Austria following his 2001 graduation from UC Berkeley. From there, an assistant position with New York City Opera eventually led to the directorship of that company's new-opera workshop, VOX.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: © JOSHUA LIPTON (BOTH)

THIS SPREAD: © CASEY KRINGLEN (BOTH)



A scene outside the car from *Hopscotch*

“In many ways, I think of myself as working backward in time. It was the contemporary opera that made me finally love opera. A lot of people call opera an acquired taste, and I think that’s how it was for me.” Now, with a generational shadow looming large over opera’s future, if uninterested millennials are ever to see the light, it may be directors such as Sharon who bring them to it.

“If you want to get people

interested in opera, do you take them to a traditional *Marriage of Figaro*? The music, of course, is sparkling, but it’s four hours long. It’s going to have traditional costumes, traditional sets. And I don’t think that’s how you get new audiences engaged with what opera is.”

To experience a performance of *Hopscotch*, or many of Sharon’s other works, is to contemplate the very definition of opera, with productions that seem equal

parts experimental theater, performance art and modern dance.

“I’ve often been asked why we continue to call it opera. I think it’s more powerful to do it that way, giving people an experience that speaks to them directly—in a way that’s beyond what they’ve experienced before—and then saying, ‘Well, that’s opera.’”

Despite his New York credentials, Sharon sees L.A. as essential to his hopes for the future. “The reason I moved out here is there’s something about this city that inspires that curiosity for the new. It feels like we have an amazing opportunity to really shift the needle.

“I think if I were in New York, I would say, ‘Oh, those things. They’re doing it out on the West Coast. It has nothing to do with real opera.’ But if it were only a gimmick, it wouldn’t resonate with people the way these pieces ultimately do. It would just have been a fun car ride.” ■

Matthew Worley, a Los Angeles-based journalist and syndicated broadcaster, serves as host of *By The Book*, a weekly author-themed talk-radio series.