

even as a falling star might drop through the sky. The  
 e, I concluded. For the Ren did not  
 an, but came out of the Celestial Waters  
 to enter it. I went in the hour of his birth and  
 stir again and it was time to go back. While  
 Sekhem's Name must have some effect on one's charac-  
 it was probably the most remote of our seven lights.  
 I passed through a darkness. The Name was  
 gone, and the Sekhem was next. A gift of the  
 sun, it was of Power, it moved our limbs, and I felt  
 begin to lift from me.  
 With its absence, my body grew still. I saw the  
 passing of this Sekhem and it was like the sunset on the  
 Nile that comes with the mist's hour. The Sekhem  
 lost with it. I was in a glory of the sunset. The clouds in  
 sky gave out a carmine light. But with evening the  
 clouds remained in view, as though to speak of some  
 before morning. For the Sekhem would have to be  
 dire question. Like the Name, it had been a gift of the  
 Celestial Waters, yet unlike the Ren, it would be  
 be stronger or weaker than when it first entered me.  
 this was the question: "Some succeed in raising the ve-  
 that claims." That was the question  
 in that silence, my limbs stiffened  
 the last of the power to give some light, shaking the  
 skin gripped itself and was done. Exhaustion might  
 been complete but for the knowledge that I was aware  
 h a darkness, yet of light no power  
 uth to stir a thought. The inquiry was  
 Sekhem had died. Had I used it well? And time was  
 by without measure. Was it an hour, or a week, or  
 the light of the moon rose in the interior of my body.  
 A bird with luminous wings flew in front of that  
 moon, and its head was as radiant as a point of light.  
 That bird must be the Khu — this sweet bird of the  
 night — I was sure of divine intelligence loaned to  
 the Ren or the Sekhem. Yes, the Khu  
 was a light, but your mind while you lived, but in death

# KHU

## TRANS AMERICA

must return to heaven. For the Khu was also eternal.  
 Out of the hovering of its wings, there came to me a  
 feeling, yes, of such tenderness as I had never known  
 for any human, nor received in return — some sorrow-  
 ful understanding of me was in the hovering of the  
 Khu. Now I knew it was an Angel, and not like the  
 Power and the Name. For the return of my Khu to  
 heaven would be neither effortless nor unhindered.  
 Even as I watched, it was clear that one of its wings was  
 injured. Of course! An Angel could not feel such  
 concern for me without sharing a few of my injuries  
 and pains. Just as such understanding returned to me,  
 however, so trust that the Khu have come to recognize its  
 opportunities because the bird began to ascend, limping  
 through the sky on its bad wing until it passed beyond  
 the moon, and the moon passed behind a cloud. I was  
 alone again. Three of my seven lights had certainly  
 departed. The Name, the Power, and the Angel, and  
 they would never die. But what of the other souls and  
 lights, my Ba, my Ka, and my Khaibit? They were not  
 nearly so immortal. Indeed, they might never survive  
 the perils of the Land of the Dead, and so could come  
 to know a second death. There was gloom within my  
 body after this thought came to me, and I waited with  
 the most anxious longing for the appearance of the Ba. I  
 felt it gave no sign it was ready to show. But the Ba, I  
 remembered, could be seen as the mistress of your  
 heart and might or might not decide to speak to you,  
 just as the heart cannot always forgive. The Ba could  
 have flown away already — some hearts are treacher-  
 ous, some can endure no suffering. Then, I wondered  
 how long I must wait before seeing my Double, but if I  
 recalled, the Ka was not supposed to appear before the  
 seventy days of embalming were done. At last, I was  
 obliged to remember the sixth of the seven lights and  
 shadows. It was the Khaibit. The Khaibit was my Shad-  
 ow, imperfect as the treacheries of my memory — such  
 was the Khaibit — my memory! But I made a count.  
 Ren, Sekhem, and Khu, the Ba, the Ka, and the Khaibit.

25/11/11

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# CONTENTS

<b>FORWARD</b> .....	4
Rebecca Ruth Hart	
<b>ANCIENT EVENINGS</b> .....	6
<b>REN</b> .....	8
<b>KHU</b> .....	11
<b>OSIRIS IN DETROIT</b> .....	12
Angus Cook	
<b>MAP</b> .....	16
<b>LIBRETTO</b> .....	20
<b>NOTES ON THE MUSIC</b> .....	27
Jonathan Bepler and Shane Anderson	
<b>PROFILES</b> .....	28
<b>CAST AND CREW</b> .....	30
<b>WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST</b> .....	32
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b> .....	35



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

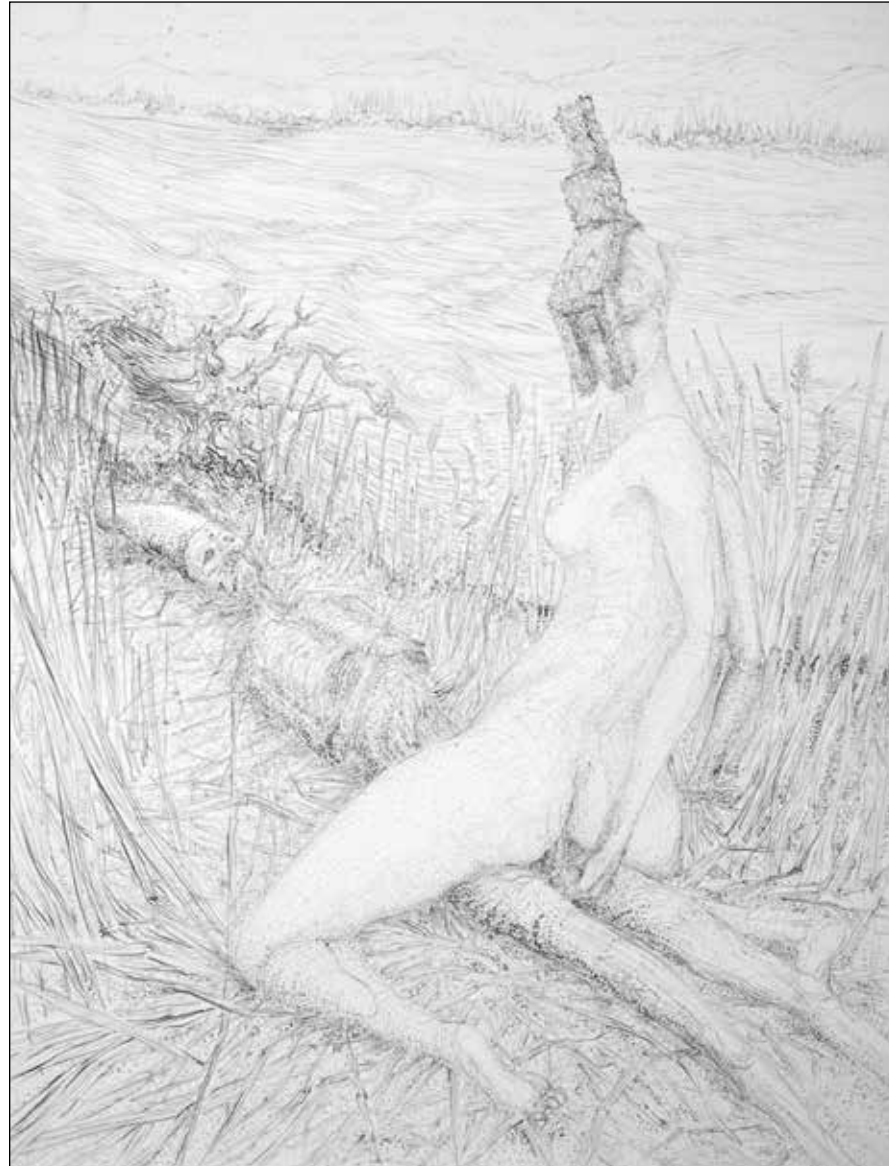
W.B. Yeats

*Ideas of Good and Evil*

Epigraph to Norman Mailer's *Ancient Evenings*



The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, either with or without flash, is strictly prohibited. **Please turn cellular phones off**, as it interferes with audio recording equipment and telecommunications. Thank you.





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## FORWARD

Rebecca Ruth Hart

In September of 1927, Diego Rivera joined the Mexican delegation traveling to the Soviet Union to observe the October Revolution's ten-year anniversary. While in the home of a Soviet worker, he noticed an unlikely grouping of portraits: Karl Marx, whose ideas laid the foundation for both communism and socialism; Vladimir Lenin, who founded the first communist state; and Henry Ford, the capitalist who in the communist mind established a working model for socialism with the Ford Motor Company. Rivera seized upon the idea of meeting Ford, who would in the following year open the world's largest integrated factory just outside Detroit. The Rouge Complex had fixed itself in Rivera's psyche.



*Detroit Industry* (detail, south wall), Diego Rivera (Mexican 1886-1957). Gift of Edsel B. Ford  
© 2010 The Detroit Institute of Arts

The Great Depression brought economic activity in the United States to a virtual halt. Despite an eighty percent drop in auto sales and lay-offs that threatened workers in most major industries, nearly 100,000 people were employed at the Rouge Industrial Complex. The Detroit River teemed with ships that moved coal, limestone, and iron ore: all readily available along the Great Lakes shoreline. Huge smelters on Zug Island supplied molten iron to the Rouge Plant's blast furnaces. Vertical integration combined onsite part production with the streamlined manufacturing of the assembly line. Yet no effort was made to mitigate the environmental effects of industry and inevitably the Rouge River became industry's waste bowl. Workers were tasked with individual steps in the manufacturing process and benefitted from the resulting daily wage. All the while, company overseers scrutinized their moral rectitude and family life, never hesitating to make an off-hour visit to the home of a worker who behaved "inappropriately" either on or off the job.

With the promise of full support from Henry Ford's son Edsel, William Valentiner, then director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, met with Rivera in San Francisco in 1930. Valentiner's goal was to commission two murals for the DIA's Garden Court. The painter agreed to study Detroit's industrial landscape in a visit later that year. Soon, an unlikely courtship emerged between Rivera, an avowed communist, and Edsel, the scion of a capitalist giant and newly appointed president of Ford Motor Company. Never shy to profess his views, Rivera must have relished this dissonant alliance. He loved it all and began to capture the dynamic energy and scale of Detroit's industries in his sketches.

Rivera eventually convinced Valentiner, Edsel Ford, and the Arts Commission that the entire courtyard, with its twenty-seven panels, should become the site for his mural work. He envisioned a cosmological narrative that extended beyond the intended center north and south walls. A compass on the western wall would show the ordinal directions, a reference to both Renaissance conventions and indigenous iconographies of the Americans. Goddess figures in the upper rank of the north and south panel offer the earth's mineral wealth to the Rouge Plant's resources. Personifications of spring and fall flank an embryo on the east to signal the cycle of life. The epic scope afforded by the additional panels would allow the suite to incorporate such dichotomies as the natural against the man-made (volcanoes in opposition to pyramids), war versus peace, and by implication, new models of production that replaced traditional shop habits.

On the north wall a blast furnace appears below a volcano, with the construction of an engine block as the central focus of the panel. Earth's fiery core is visually linked to the oxygen furnace and Ford's internal combustion engines. The activities depicted all occur in the integrated system at the Rouge, yet operations assigned to different buildings at the plant were conflated in the murals. The multiethnic workforce of Rivera's utopian vision was depicted assembling the V-8 engine block, a wrong-minded image at a time when there was rigid enforcement of segregation by race and ethnicity. On the south wall the final assembly of the chassis is shown along with stamping machines and curious onlookers that include Dick Tracy. In the Albert Khan Assembly Building of the 1920s and today in the William McDonough designed Truck Assembly Plant, the Ford Motor Company invites the public to watch the assembly line.

Diego Rivera was in Detroit for less than a year and in that time he created the *Detroit Industry* murals that capture the essence of manufacturing and still elicit pride from her citizens. In the nearly eighty years since their creation, the industrial models that structured both the murals and Rivera's utopia have moved into obsolescence and left the city in search of more relevant paradigms. The remains of a once proud but now-idle enterprise beckoned Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler as a site for their performance, inspired by Normal Mailer's novel *Ancient Evenings*. Rivera depicted chasses in formation amid an industrial terrain: in the progress of KHU, performed along Detroit's industrial corridor this afternoon, we are invited to consider a more transformative proposition.

## ANCIENT EVENINGS

“Ancient Evenings” is a three act performative collaboration by Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler that is inspired by American author Norman Mailer’s 1983 eponymous novel set in ancient Egypt. The three acts will necessarily be performed as one-time only, live events and will take place in different locations that are part of the contemporary landscape. A nontraditional opera, the “Ancient Evenings” project is structured in seven parts, corresponding to the seven stages of the soul’s departure from the body as it passes from death to rebirth according to Egyptian mythology. The *ren* representing the departure of one’s secret name; the *sekhem* of one’s power; the *khu* of one’s light; the *ba* of one’s spirit; the *ka* of one’s double; the *khabit* of one’s shadow; and finally the *sekhu*, one’s remains.



Production Still, *Cremaster 3*, 1967 Chrysler Imperial

While Mailer’s novel chronicles the soul’s progression through death and rebirth as told through the story of one man, Menenhetet I, who is reincarnated three times, Barney and Bepler’s story replaces the body of a man with the body of an automobile. Three generations of American automobile design act as vehicles that carry the narrative: a 1967 Chrysler Crown Imperial (known for its crashworthiness) is transmogrified into a 1979 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am (known as the last high-performance engine of the original muscle car generation) and finally as a 2001 Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor (known for its tireless service in the U.S. Government fleet).

Loosely based on Mailer’s tour de force novel, the “Ancient Evenings” performances combine Egyptian mythology with mythologies as diverse as American, Mayan and Celtic. Set primarily amid the American landscape, “Ancient Evenings” uses the language of modern industrial processing and recycling to tell the story of its automobile protagonist. The location of each act further engenders the story with a set of local mythologies, symbolisms and indigenous musical traditions that support what is ultimately a material narrative generated in the expanded field.

Marking Barney and Bepler’s sixth collaboration, the “Ancient Evenings” project began development in 2007. Its first act *REN* was performed at a car dealership in south Los Angeles in 2008. In *REN*, the automobile, here the 1967



Production Still, *REN*, 1979 Pontiac Trans Am

Chrysler Crown Imperial from *Cremaster 3*, undergoes its first death and is prepared for its rebirth as the 1979 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am. The second act, *KHU* is set in Detroit, bringing the Chrysler back to its birthplace, a city built upon the vast expanses of salt beds beneath Michigan. *KHU* is the only act that will feature all three automobiles. The next act of “Ancient Evenings” will take place in New York City as the automobile is further transformed, generating sculpture as the narrative is materialized. Each act is further characterized by musical instruments that are constructed according to the narrative, so that the story unfolds both theatrically and musically with an evolution of new forms.

While each act employs local talent along with local traditions and mythologies, the characters from Barney and Bepler’s previous collaboration *Cremaster 3* — the Entered Apprentice played by Barney, the Entered Novitiate played by Aimee Mullins and the 1967 Imperial, victorious in the Chrysler Building’s Demolition Derby — are here featured as an evolving set of characters, most pronounced in an abstraction of the myth of Isis and Osiris. “Ancient Evenings” is a moving arena where personal, local, and cultural mythologies are interwoven in tandem.

Excerpted from primary texts from Mailer’s *Ancient Evenings* to the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* and *The Pyramid Texts*, the libretto draws upon historical rites and a contemporary retelling, offering a confluence of meditations on the timeless concerns of mortality and regeneration.



2001 Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor

## REN

On the evening of May 18, 2008, a live audience of approximately 600 assembled at a Chrysler car dealership in Santa Fe Springs, California to attend the performance of *REN*, the first in a series of three performances staged by long-time collaborators Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler, inspired by the 1983 Norman Mailer novel *Ancient Evenings*.

“It was a strange ritual, sleaze meeting sublimity, as American myth and Egyptian lore hooked up at a car dealership amid the strip malls of Southern California for a violent, otherworldly sound and image-scape.”  
– Christopher Bollen

“To describe comprehensively what followed would be to challenge the limits of ekphrasis – and perhaps that is the point. As Peggy Phelan argued, the ontology of performance is predicated on its unreproducibility and, in this case, its unreportability: you had to be there.”  
– Christopher Bedford



*Ren* represents the loss of one's name after death, the first of seven stages the soul undergoes as it departs the deceased body, according to Egyptian mythology. Here, the *ren* is visually drawn as a rope surrounding a name cartouche in life, and the loosening of the rope after death.

*REN* elaborates this first stage of the soul's departure via a four hour live performance in which the body of a 1967 Chrysler Crown Imperial is destroyed. In the 2002 film *Cremaster 3*, the green Imperial, which personified the character of the Entered Apprentice, defeated a 1938 Chrysler Imperial, personifying the Entered Apprentice's elder nemesis, the Architect Hiram Abiff, in a Demolition Derby.

In *REN*, the once victorious 1967 Imperial is crowned by the Entered Apprentice's double, the Entered Novitiate, portrayed by the actress Aimee Mullins in *Cremaster 3*. The Novitiate's body laid atop the roof of the car, which was masked with a mint condition 1967 Imperial hood inlaid with a winged scarab amulet made from lapis lazuli, turquoise, carnelian and gold. As sections of local bugle and drum corps arrived on the scene from the surrounding neighborhoods and created a surround sound atmosphere of ceremonial dirge, audience members made their way through the dealership's lot and onto a ramp where the Imperial lay inert. After a prologue performed by the drum and bugle corps, the proceedings began, overseen by the manager of the car dealership who delivered an oration to the audience: “In the Golden State, Khepera, the great scarab

burrows her glowing sphere beneath the earth in the darkness of the night, reemerging each morning to push this luminous ball across the sky, dropping it into the Pacific Ocean to create the evening. Khepera's ball of dung gives birth to the new day!”

As the car was slowly moved, a port-a-let with a massive, spherical septic tank impaling its back end became visible. Accompanied by the bugle and drum corps, a group of pallbearer mechanics began to laboriously haul the car down a ramp and through the parking lot of the dealership, halting before the showroom. The primary mechanics removed the nameplates, hood ornament and other insignia from the car's body and placed them inside the showroom on a ten foot long *ren*, which was lying on the floor. The death mask of the car was also removed and placed inside the showroom. A gold 1979 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am was parked inside. As percussionists began to pound five large pentastar-shaped drums inside, the Firebird was ignited, the revolutions of its engine corresponding to the vibrations of a sub-bass sound system in its trunk, which became increasingly frenetic as the pristine car was driven out of the showroom, escorted by a tuba section. The mechanics then proceeded to drag the Imperial into the showroom where spectators entered and witnessed a mournful monologue performed by Ranchera singer Lila Downs with an all-female Mariachi band, quoting Mailer's text: “Crude thoughts and fierce forces are my state. I do not know who I am. Nor what I was. I cannot hear a sound. Pain is near that will be like no pain felt before.” The Imperial's engine was ignited and caught fire. The audience was ushered out of the showroom and gathered around its windows outside, prepared to watch the final destruction of the



car's body as a twenty ton stump grinder entered the space. The stump grinder began to destroy the car, violently shredding it to pieces that sprayed across the showroom. When the destruction was complete, the mechanics again entered the showroom and began to separate the car's recyclable and non-recyclable parts, while taking special care to ensure that the 4-cylinder block engine remained intact. Finally, the men removed the rope from the *ren* cartouche. The audience entered the showroom, lingering among the remains of the Imperial as a chorus of salesmen sang: “Cold fires wash through his sightless eyes as they prepare to leave. Nor do they take sudden flight, but depart with the decorum of a council of priests, all but one, the *Ren*, his secret name, who leaves at once even as a falling star might drop through the sky.”

The audience was then ushered through the offices of the dealership to the services and parts department, a large, dark garage containing rows of wrecked Chryslers. Displayed in the center of the garage was the 1979 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am, crowned with the body of the Entered Novitiate. Opposite the car, Lila Downs began a mournful aria: “Is one human? Or merely alive? Like a blade of grass equal to all existence in the moment it is torn? Yes. If pain is fundament, then a blade of grass can know all there is.” The singer addressed the scarab-faced Khepera, portrayed by the British performance artist Mouse, as she presided before the Trans Am as the Egyptian god of self-generation. A black veil was extracted from Khepera's bowels and draped over the car, ushering in the night and concluding the performance.



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# DETROIT, MICHIGAN

SATURDAY OCTOBER 2, 2010  
*(one time only)*

# KHU

## ACT 2 OF ANCIENT EVENINGS

*Directed by*

MATTHEW BARNEY AND JONATHAN BEPLER

*Written by*

MATTHEW BARNEY

*Music by*

JONATHAN BEPLER

*Produced by*

MATTHEW BARNEY

*with*

AIMEE MULLINS, EUGENE PERRY, HERBERT PERRY,  
JENNIE KNAGGS, SHARA WORDEN AND BELITA WOODS

*Presented in Association with*  
GLADSTONE GALLERY

*Assistant Director*  
TONY GERBER

*Conductors*  
DAN SUTTON AND  
JONATHAN BEPLER

*Producer*  
MIKE BELLON

*Director of Photography*  
PETER STRIETMANN

*Music Production Supervisor*  
ANDREW KRAMP

*Production Design*  
MATTHEW D. RYLE

*Sound Supervisor*  
JEFF JONES

*Music Instrument Development*  
DANIEL JENATSCH

*Stage Managers*  
DAVE SHELLEY AND  
BRETT FINLEY

*Foundry Design and Operation*  
CASEY WESTBROOK

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# OSIRIS IN DETROIT

Angus Cook

Houdini, James Lee Byars, Osiris. One born in Detroit. Another died there. One born in Cairo. Two died there. The purity of coincidence is no coincidence. But a happy one. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them* (Matthew 18:20).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Osiris rules the land of the dead, the western regions behind which the sun sets, yet the details of his life are so sketchy and contradictory, so scattered across a vast array of sources, that it’s difficult to discern a single, coherent narrative. *So...* He is locked in a casket by brother Set, and thrown into the Nile, whereupon He drowneth. Subsequently resuscitated by sister Isis, He is dismembered by brother Set, who scatters the fourteen body-parts across the sacred lands of Egypt. Sister does gather the fragments together, except for His privates. Those a crocodile ate (some say a fish). She resourcefully fashions a substitute from some wood, to make love to Him, whom she then preserves for all time by turning Him into the world’s first and still most famous mummy. Without a body, there was no afterlife.

“The sine qua non of their funerary practice (and consequently, the center of our perspective on them) remains the persistence of individual identity. In this insistence on the ground of being lies the absolute basis of reality for the Egyptians. And in this they are our fathers and our mothers in the West.”

Tom Hare, *ReMembering Osiris*

The idea of a coherent identity persisting beyond bodily death developed into the notion of selfhood, of individuality, of something more or less corresponding to the soul—a spiritual property, integral to a single person and retaining that person’s particular characteristics, not

12

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just throughout the life, but surviving physical death. The bound lines of the mummification process lay directly behind the invention of the straitjacket. In the introduction to *Il Mistero di Osiris*, one of Houdini’s unrealized film scripts, he wrote, “Nothing in the world becomes lost.” Resistance to closure by ritualizing processes of containment and escape.

If it’s magic, why can’t it be everlasting? The life and many deaths of Osiris, the multiple near-death experiences of Harry Houdini, *The Death of James Lee Byars*: they have in common an understanding that everything which quietly lies down may quietly get up. Consider this life-death cycle as a way of thinking about the creative imagination, feeding myth, magic, art. And, the other way round. Everything that rises must converge: the rhythms of the seasons and the tides; comic, tragic, comic; more, less, more. The momentariness of the human predicament is where the cyclical is most noticeably, most sadly, not going to spin. Perhaps it is through the futility of our immortal longings that we call on Osiris and Houdini to magic the linearity of our life-spans into a wheel of eternal return.



Isis and Osiris raising the Djed Pillar  
The Great Temple of Abydos (1294 – 1279 BC)

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

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

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

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

13



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# OSIRIS IN DETROIT

(continued)

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

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

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

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

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



Belle Isle Bridge, Detroit River

In order to escape from the restraining order of a certain kind of truth, he would resort to contortion, thus generating new truths: the inside-out, upside-down truth of myth. Adam Phillips suggests,

*Above all, [Houdini] shows us, the audience wants to know that it can’t see: wants to thrill to its own ignorance.*

Hmmn. Houdini often performed in public free of charge, both to generate publicity and for the benefit of those unable to afford a ticket because they happened to come from the same sort of weakened environment of poverty and persecution that Houdini himself had escaped from. Always, and only, escaping. His Detroit jump was one of those non-paying stunts. Perhaps what the audience wanted to know was not that it couldn’t see (which is not something an audience would want to know). And perhaps what that audience wanted to thrill to was not its own ignorance (which is hardly something those living in a weakened environment would be likely to thrill to). Perhaps what that audience was hoping to experience, even if only on this one

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occasion, was precisely a divergence between seeing and believing, between destiny and freewill, between supposed facts and each individual’s own interpretation of them. Dominance of the invisible, the impossible, the only dreamed of.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Death as overkill—turning every life within a life into a fragment, into a stage, into if not life, then,

THE END. To be Continued. And, *and then he woke up.*

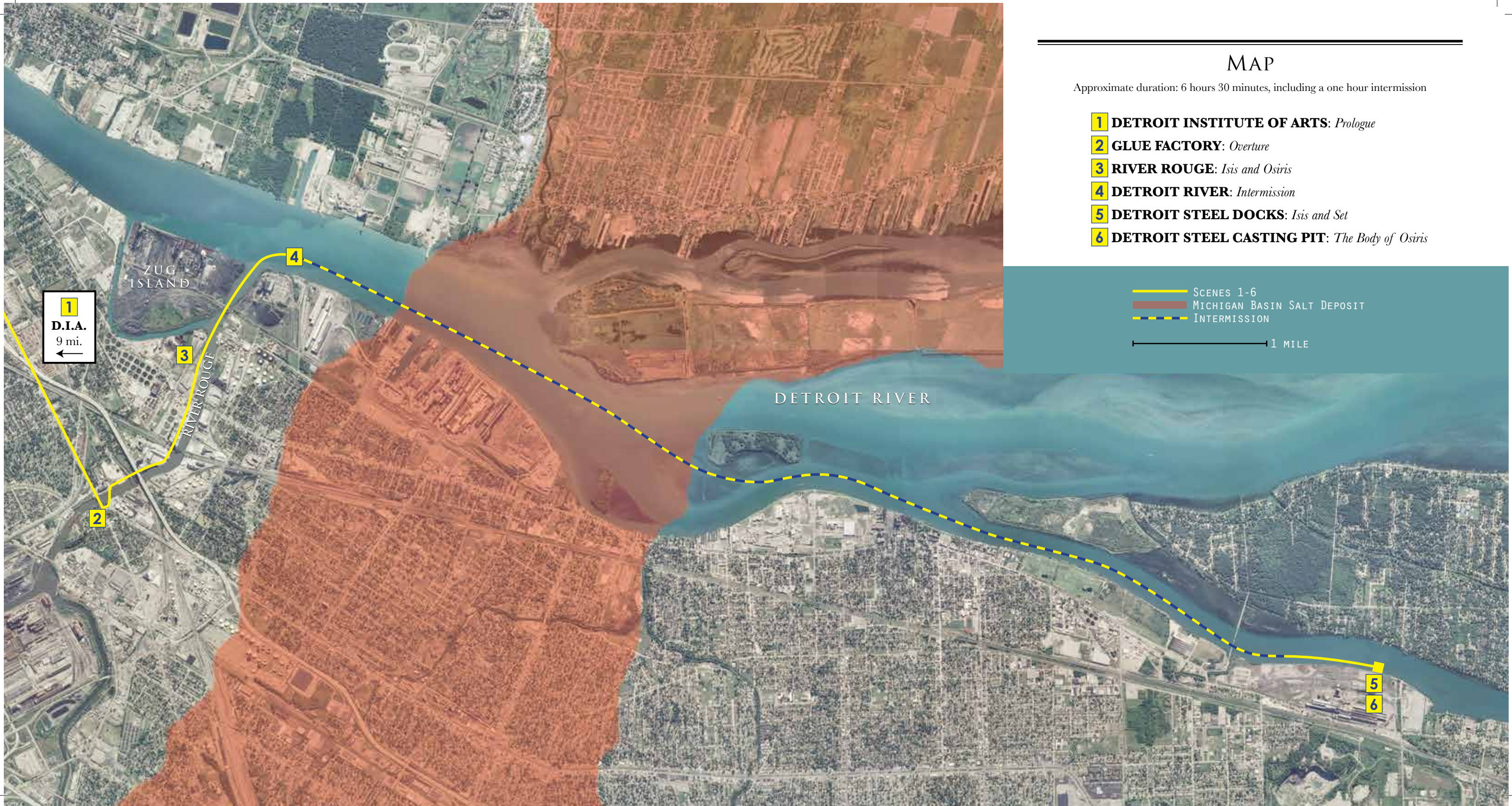
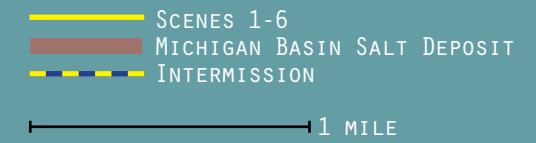
## For further reading

*Nearly Dying for a Living*, Harry Houdini  
*Osiris: Death and Afterlife of a God*, Bojana Mojsov  
*The Quest for Corvo, An Experiment in Biography*, AJA Symons  
*American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance*, John Irwin  
*Henry Ford and the Jews: The Mass Production of Hate*, Neil Baldwin  
*The Riddle of Resurrection, “Dying and Rising Gods” in the Ancient Near East*, Tryggve Mettinger  
*The Handicap Principle*, Amotz Zahavi

# MAP

Approximate duration: 6 hours 30 minutes, including a one hour intermission

- 1** DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS: *Prologue*
- 2** GLUE FACTORY: *Overture*
- 3** RIVER ROUGE: *Isis and Osiris*
- 4** DETROIT RIVER: *Intermission*
- 5** DETROIT STEEL DOCKS: *Isis and Set*
- 6** DETROIT STEEL CASTING PIT: *The Body of Osiris*



**1**  
D.I.A.  
9 mi.  
←

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## LIBRETTO

### **Detroit Sewage Treatment Plant: Prologue**

SET (Eugene Perry, baritone)  
JAMES LEE BYARS (Matthew Barney)  
2 FORENSIC INVESTIGATORS (Don Becks, Krista Evans-Wiseman)

An abandoned Catholic church next to the Detroit Sewage Treatment Plant has been cordoned off with police tape. There is an investigation underway inside the church, where a forensic truck is parked under the altar. The truck has a gilded interior. Wearing a top hat and gold suit, JAMES LEE BYARS lies blindfolded inside the gilded truck. Unusually long sleeves cover his hands. A gold 1979 Pontiac Firebird TRANS AM sits at the other end of the church's interior.

SET, a tall, stoic-faced man, enters the church. He fastens the coat sleeves of JAMES LEE BYARS' straight-jacket and escorts him into the driver's seat of the TRANS AM. Five gold spheres rest in a pentagonal shape in the TRANS AM's interior. SET starts the TRANS AM ignition.

SET:  
*Five points make a man.*<sup>1</sup>

Two FORENSIC INVESTIGATORS seal the driver's side door closed with molten plastic. Suddenly, SET takes a wrecking bar and spears it through the windshield, knocking the gearshift into drive. The TRANS AM accelerates out of the church, descends the stairs, and follows an unmarked police car, which escorts the gold car at high speed through the streets of Detroit.

(spell)

SET:  
*Quietly lie down, and quietly get up.*<sup>2</sup>

The TRANS AM now speeds onto the Belle Isle Bridge, swerves off course, and crashes through the bridge's guardrails. It flies through the air, and dives down into the depths of the Detroit River.

### **Glue Factory: Overture**

BELITA WOODS (contralto)  
8 ASSEMBLY LINE WORKERS  
16 METALINS  
8 TROMBONES

On the dirt floor of a derelict glue factory, WORKERS stand in a line behind a long table, assembling simple boxes from scraps of sheet metal. Each box is fit onto a small cast iron chassis and connected to an iron neck, creating the structure for a basic musical instrument, a metalin. WORKERS string the metalins' necks, and assemble simple, copper-wired bows. When the instruments are finished, the WORKERS pass them to MUSICIANS, who begin to play a slow, oblique progression. BELITA WOODS enters the factory.

(aria)

BELITA WOODS:  
*O D., as you are endowed with life, bring me this, for see, I have come.  
Do you know those two rivers, Magic-man?*

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Note: Some texts have been slightly altered for narrative continuity  
[1] James Lee Byars, *The Death of James Lee Byars*, 1982/ 1994 [2] Ibid

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## LIBRETTO

*I know them.  
What are those two rivers, Magic-man?  
They are the Rouge and the Detroit, or so I believe.  
Do you know those two kings, Magic-man?  
I know them.  
Who are those two kings, Magic-man?  
They are the Trans American, and the Crown Imperial, or so I believe.  
O D., as you are endowed with life, bring me this, for see, I have come.*<sup>3</sup>

### **River Rouge: Isis and Osiris**

ISIS (Aimee Mullins)  
NEPHTHYS (Jennie Knaggs, mezzo-soprano)  
LIEUTENANT WORDEN (Shara Worden, soprano)  
7 MICHIGAN STATE FORENSIC CHORUS  
4 PATROL BOATS: EACH WITH SAXOPHONE QUARTET AND PERCUSSION

(rouge dance)

An investigation is underway at the mouth of the Rouge River. A police helicopter hovers overhead. Federal investigators ISIS and NEPHTHYS arrive in a brown 2001 Ford CROWN VICTORIA Police Interceptor. They supervise as agents search the reeds along the shore. A torn gold sleeve containing four river snakes has been found. From the river's edge, ISIS notices a piece of metal protruding from the water, and boards a police boat with NEPHTHYS for a closer look. Four boats approach, each carrying a SAXOPHONE QUARTET and a PERCUSSIONIST. Chords are first heard from the distance, and the musical composition continues to develop, surrounding ISIS' boat.

(boarding aria and chorus)

NEPHTHYS:  
*Osiris, come to your house.  
Please your heart, all your foes are not.  
Your two sisters guard your bier, call for you in tears.  
Turn around on your bier. See the women, speak to us.  
King our lord, drive all pain from our hearts.  
Your court of gods and men beholds you, show them your face.  
Let your face not shun our faces! Our hearts are glad to see you, King.  
I am your beloved sister. Your foe is fallen, he shall not be.  
I am with you, your bodyguard, for all eternity.*<sup>4</sup>

The shredded remains of a 1967 Chrysler IMPERIAL have been dredged up from the river's bottom. At the sight of the IMPERIAL, ISIS vomits.

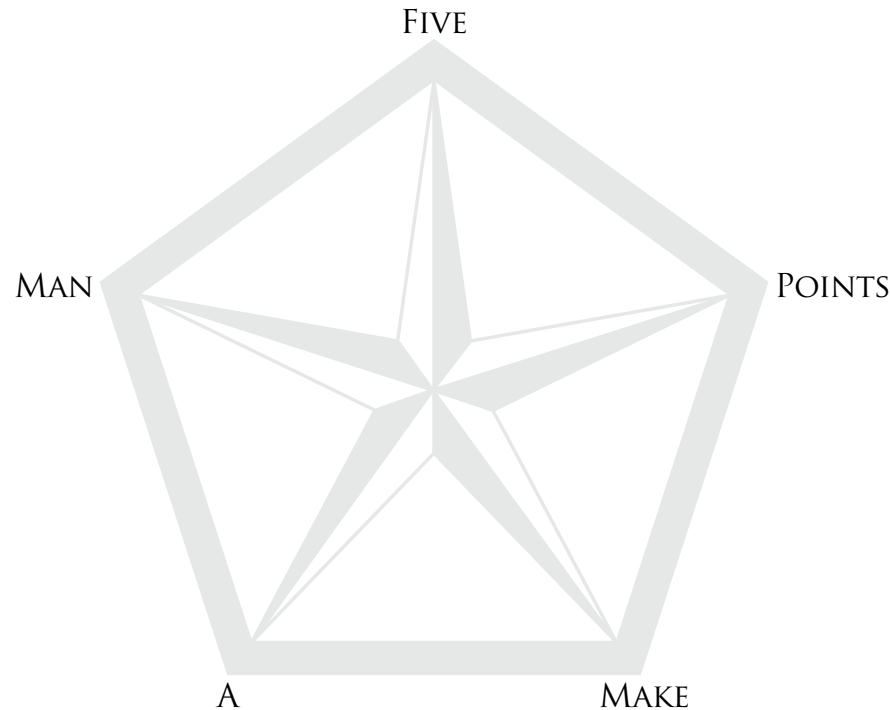
(lament)

NEPHTHYS: (*wiping ISIS' face with a tissue*)  
*Isis is faint on the water  
Isis rises on the water  
Her tears fall on the water  
See, Osiris enters His sister.*<sup>5</sup>

CHORUS:  
*Thirst is in the rivers of the body. The rivers burn but do not move.  
Flesh—is it flesh?—lies beneath some heated stone.*<sup>6</sup>

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[3] *Book of the Dead, Spell 99* (Third Intermediate Period, 1069 – 1991 BC to Late Kingdom, 752 – 343 BC)  
[4] *Book of Going Forth by Day, The Songs of Isis and Nephthys* (1250 BC) [5] *Book of Going Forth by Day, Hymn to Isis* (1250 BC) [6] Norman Mailer, *Ancient Evenings* (1983)



*Quietly Lie Down, and Quietly Get Up*

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## LIBRETTO

From the IMPERIAL remains, the CHORUS of investigators has uncovered a bronze shaft covered in silt; an unearthed root with a similar, phallic silhouette; and a long shaft of cubic salt crystal. They have also found a late model Chrysler 4-cylinder engine. ISIS wipes away the mud, and removes the head from the engine block to expose a gold headgasket, resting over the four open cylinders. From a plastic evidence bag, ISIS removes the four river snakes, and places one snake in each engine cylinder. NEPHTHYS removes ISIS' slacks and ISIS moves the crotch of her underpants to the side, exposing her genitals to the engine block. With the remaining river water in the bag, she rubs the inside of her thighs and sits atop the exposed headgasket. ISIS then removes the oil filter, and mercury begins to leak from the engine. ISIS takes a handful of mercury and speaks quietly to the IMPERIAL.

(soliloquy)

ISIS:

*Dear Brother, it is part of the difficulties of our position that we cannot even talk to each other, or you will disappear again. And so. We will touch. We cannot talk, though there is so much to tell ... Our position is most vulnerable. We must touch quickly. When there is need for gentle days, You may bring sugar to the fruit trees, and encouragement to the crops of the fields in Dearborn. But when you enter the Rouge by night, You will wear My winding sheet. Now, will My son be the golden Eye of the day, and the silver eye of the moon.*<sup>7</sup>

ISIS casts the mercury into the collection pan beneath the engine block, and stands to put her pants back on. The barge steams for miles down the Detroit River.

(lament)

NEPHTHYS: *(over tender accompaniment)*  
*The seed of Set is as dense as milk of silver,*  
*All of Set that has collected in my palm*  
*Now is heavy, and brilliant like the moon*  
*That liquid silver, no more (and no less!)*  
*Is a distillation of the seed of Set.*

*If every weed in the marsh must turn poisonous*  
*On the consequence, our natives, who graze upon these weeds,*  
*Have turned as spineless as mercury in their will,*  
*And so we are reduced from a great nation into one without character,*  
*Yes, every ejaculation of our Gods that is not left in the body of another*  
*Is the birth of a new disease.*<sup>8</sup>

### Docks at the Detroit Steel Mill: Isis and Set

ISIS (Aimee Mullins)  
NEPHTHYS (Jennie Knaggs, mezzo-soprano)  
SET (Eugene Perry and Herbert Perry, baritone)  
3 SCRAP IRONWORKERS  
4 CONSTRUCTION WORKERS  
12 BREATH WORKERS  
CHORUS

The barge arrives at a massive derelict steel mill. Smoke billows from partially standing structures in the distance. Workers roam the dystopian worksite. As the barge approaches the docks, an angry SET emerges from a construction trailer.

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[7]Ibid [8]Ibid

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## LIBRETTO

(confrontation recitative)

SET: *(waving his arms at the ship's captain)*  
*This is private property! You cannot bring that ship into this dock!*

ISIS: *(stepping to the railing at the edge of the ship)*  
*Special Agent Mullins, sir ... There is a Federal investigation underway here.*  
*We will need to bring this ship into this dock.*

SET:

*Negative. We are imploding three structures on this property today. The explosives are already wired. This dock is a no-go zone.*

The ship lands at the dock. 12 BREATH WORKERS stand wearing respirators fit with breathing "organs," which produce wheezing chords as they breathe. The CHORUS lines up in opposition to the CONSTRUCTION WORKERS.

(discovery serenade and chorus)

SET:

*What is this? ... A Chrysler? This must be a 1967 Imperial. Chrysler Imperial. New Yorker?*

CHORUS:

*Crown!*

ISIS:

*This vehicle was removed from the River Rouge earlier today. There are no flammable fluids remaining in the engine. You don't need to be concerned. I need to remind you this is a matter of national security.*

SET:

*1967 Chrysler Crown Imperial. New Yorker.*

CHORUS:

*Crown Imperial!*

SET:

*I killed this fuck once out west, and killed him again on Belle Isle. I'll take this fuck and kill him again! Give me that fuck! Osiris ...*

(intonation)

NEPHTHYS:

*She sought her brother without wearying*  
*She wandered the country grief-stricken*  
*She did not rest until she found him*  
*She made a coolness with her wings, and wind with her feathers*  
*She brought her brother ashore, and erected his limpness*  
*She received his seed, and formed his heir.*<sup>9</sup>

ISIS places a phone call to her Department.

ISIS: *(into the phone)*

*Special Agent Mullins here. I have a situation here at the old McClouth Steel Mill in Trenton.*

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[9]The Schabaka Text, Osiris Hymn (c 710 BC)

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## LIBRETTO

*I'm going to need some armed backup. We've run into some interference from a construction crew. The forensic team here is unarmed, and the construction workers are becoming hostile. We have recovered some evidence from the Rouge, which I believe is critical to the Detroit River case.*

NEPHTHYS abandons ISIS and disembarks the barge. The chorus and musicians follow her, lining up behind SET.

(incantation duet)

SET:

*I am the girdle of the cloth of the River of Feces,  
Cold and dark, and the guardian of the rushes,  
Uniting the two regions who are in my body,  
By the first great words of power of my mouth.  
I do not raise up the one who is fallen;  
The one who did lie in the valley of The Rouge, lies prostrate again.  
I am at peace; I remember him.  
I have taken away Osiris from the house wherein I found him.  
In my strength I have brought darkness;  
I have plucked out the eye from the one who is without it.  
Truth is in my body.<sup>10</sup>*

2 BREATH WORKERS board the barge and restrain ISIS, leading her to the dock. SET commands his crane operator to claim the IMPERIAL.

(cutting ensemble)

SET:

*Listen, here's how I want this done. We will cut him into 14 pieces!  
Cut across the firewall, behind the block, on line with the transmission head.  
Cut the front axle in half, and remove the remaining tires. The driveshaft will remain in one piece.  
Remove the differential, then, we will quarter the chassis!*

A crew of SCRAP IRONWORKERS torch cut the IMPERIAL into 14 pieces. SET approaches ISIS and places a gold hood over her head.

ISIS: *(shouting, struggling)*

*I am She-who-made-the-joys-of-love, with He-who-made-the-horizon!  
And I am She-whose-brother-was-bitten!  
I am She-who-hunted-thru-rushes-in-far-off-regions,  
And who-will-put-together-what-was-laid-asunder-fourteen-times!  
The part will be as the whole, and He will return to the Rouge in this nome of Detroit!  
Let the Ka of my brother come forth from the eyes and mouth of His new abode!<sup>11</sup>*

NEPHTHYS:

*An adoration of Osiris  
Who did rise from the river, he makes his Khu,  
A visible form of his soul, rise like a powerful ghost.  
The shining spectre of Osiris.  
Hail Osiris!<sup>12</sup>*

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## LIBRETTO

### Casting Pit, Detroit Steel Plant: *The Body of Osiris*

FULL CAST AND ENSEMBLE

IRON WORKERS

NEPHTHYS (Jennie Knaggs, mezzo-soprano)

BELITA WOODS (contralto)

5 JAMES LEE BYARS

3 TRASH CONTAINER PERCUSSIONISTS

6 LONG STRING PLAYERS

1 VULTURE

ISIS has been locked in the back of the CROWN VICTORIA, which drives up a long ramp to an embankment wall overlooking a deep excavated pit. Five furnaces stand at the pit's back wall, resembling enormous termite mounds. Smoke billows from the furnaces as IRON WORKERS load them with limestone, coke, and iron. Five 125-foot towers loom over the furnaces. A lone figure in the golden costume of JAMES LEE BYARS stands on each tower. As the heat intensifies, the fourteen pieces of the IMPERIAL are dumped into the furnaces, where they are reduced to molten iron.

The entire cast and ensemble has made its way into the pit. An accumulation of musical density builds as the furnaces continue to burn. LONG STRING PLAYERS bow and pluck 200-foot-long amplified cables, which extend from the casting pit up to the top of the towers, while PIT PERCUSSIONISTS pound on three large metal trash containers.

The IRON WORKERS now open the furnaces. Twenty-five tons of glowing orange molten iron flood through small rivers into a reservoir, and overflow into a smaller mold lower in the pit. This is the casting of the *DJED*.

(resurrection aria)

NEPHTHYS:

*Khu is a light in the mind of the living, but in death, it must return to heaven  
For the Khu is also eternal. Out of the hovering of its wings, there comes a feeling,  
Yes, of such tenderness one has never known  
For any human, nor received in return—Some sorrowful understanding  
Is in the hovering of the Khu.<sup>13</sup>*

The *DJED* and the molten iron remaining in the reservoir slowly fade from orange to grey, as the sky goes dark. A thick metallic gold fluid emerges beneath the figures of JAMES LEE BYARS and slowly flows down the five towers. The voice of BELITA WOODS is now heard as she stands before the CROWN VICTORIA carrying ISIS. A VULTURE is perched on top of the car.

(departure of khu)

BELITA WOODS:

*Pain took abode in the most brilliant light.  
He was exposed to burning rock. Demonic,  
The heat of the sun, and blood boiling in the veins.  
Would it never be blood again?  
Cold fires wash behind his sightless eyes as he prepares to leave.<sup>14</sup>*

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[10] *The Papyrus of Ani, Chapter 80* (1250 BC) [11] Reconstructed from several sources including Norman Mailer, *Ancient Evenings* (1983) [12] *The Pyramid Texts* (Old Kingdom, 2650 – 2150 BC)

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[13] Norman Mailer, *Ancient Evenings* (1983) [14] *Ibid*



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## NOTES ON THE MUSIC

### LINES WIND PIPE WITH STEEL, OR: HOW THE MUSIC IS BUILT

Jonathan Bepler and Shane Anderson

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

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## MATTHEW BARNEY, JONATHAN BEPLER



Matthew Barney was born in 1967 in San Francisco and lives and works in New York. He has been included in group exhibitions such as Documenta IX in Kassel, Germany; the 1993 and 1995 Whitney Biennial; and the 1993 and 2003 Venice Biennale. A one-person exhibition “The Cremaster Cycle,” organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, traveled to the Museum Ludwig, Cologne and the Musée d’ Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2002-03). A retrospective of the *Drawing Restraint* series organized by the 21st c Museum for Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan, traveled to Leeum Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Serpentine Gallery, London; and Kunsthalle Vienna (2005-08). The exhibition “Matthew Barney: Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail” is on view at Schaulager Basel, Switzerland through October 3, 2010. Barney has received numerous awards including the Aperto prize at the 1993 Venice Biennale and the Hugo Boss award in 1996; most recently he was the recipient of the 2007 Kaiser Ring Award in Goslar, Germany.

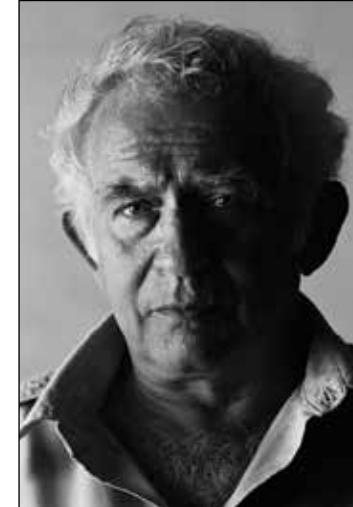


Born in Philadelphia, Jonathan Bepler was largely self-taught on many instruments before he attended Bennington College in 1982; there, his studies focused on composition, improvisation, and performance. Bepler’s interest in collaboration and interdisciplinary work was fully explored during the twenty years he lived in New York City, his work often involving the co-mingling of many seemingly disparate elements, a love of chaos, and a thirst for reconciliation. He has collaborated often with choreographers including John Jasperse (*California*), Sasha Waltz (*S, Gezeiten*), and Jennifer Lacey (*This is an Epic, Mhmmm*, and *Les Assistantes*). Bepler has led ensembles of both improvised and pre-composed music in New York and Europe. His concert music includes works for the Ensemble Modern, the Glenn Branca Ensemble, and the Basel Synfonietta. A collaboration with artist Ann-Sofi Siden will be presented this winter at the Royal Dramatic Theater of Sweden.

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## NORMAN MAILER



Norman Mailer (1923–2007) was an American novelist, journalist, essayist, playwright, screenwriter and film director who is considered to have been an innovator of New Journalism, a form of creative nonfiction that wove autobiography, real events, and political commentary into unconventional novels. During his 60 year career, Mailer wrote more than 40 books, winning the Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction and the National Book Award in 1968 for *The Armies of the Night*, and a second Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1980 for *The Executioner’s Song*. In 2005 he was awarded the National Book Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters.

Mailer worked on *Ancient Evenings* from 1972–1983, spending more time writing this book than any other. Set in Egypt between 1290–1100 BC and chronicling the lives of its protagonist Menenhetet I, *Ancient Evenings* was declared “an ambitious and daring work of fiction,” by one critic, though it received generally negative reviews at the time it was published. As Harold Bloom wrote in the *New York Review of Books*: “Mailer’s is too formidable a case of an authentic literary drive to be dismissed, and dismissal is certainly not my intention. *Ancient Evenings* is on the road of excess, and what Karl Kraus said of the theories of Freud may hold for the speculations of Mailer also—it may be that only the craziest parts are true. Mailer probably is aware that his Egyptian obsessions are in the main tradition of American literature, carrying on from much of the imagery of the major writers of the American renaissance.”

*The Executioner’s Song* was the inspiration for Matthew Barney’s 1999 film *Cremaster 2*, in which Mailer portrayed Harry Houdini.

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## CAST

### CAST

ISIS.....Aimee Mullins  
NEPHTHYS.....Jennie Knaggs  
SET.....Eugene Perry  
SET.....Herbert Perry  
OSIRUS J.L.B.....Matthew Barney  
BELITA WOODS.....herself  
LIEUTENANT WORDEN.....Shara Worden  
OFFICERS.....Don Becks, Krista Evans-Wiseman  
OFFICERS CHORUS.....Margaret Cassetto, Seycon Nadia Chea,  
Natalie Cochran, Leah Deraney, Yana Lavovna, Jill Opal Oliver, Tamara Whitty  
ASSEMBLY LINE WORKERS.....Michael Branning, Mildred Cross, Kat Delph,  
Eric Hubel, Ralph Jones, Shawn Newell, Garrett Pappow, Harry Schnur, Dennis Spors,  
Michael Tyson, Ralph Valdez, Rachel Walski  
CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATORS.....Ryan Myers, Bethany Waldon  
BARGEMEN.....Josh Bemelen, Giles Rosbury, Bill Strietmann, Chris Vollmer, Randy Voss  
TORCHMEN.....Felipe Asevedo, Jacobo Lopez  
FLATBED DRIVER.....Tiny  
J.L.B. ....Nick Cocciolone, Jamie Easter, Gus Kunesh, Kate Kunesh, Nate Young  
VULTURE.....Benson  
VULTURE HANDLERS.....Dennis Grisco, Glen Grisco  
PALLBEARERS.....Ryan Clark, Michael Tyson  
BARGEMEN.....Josh Bemelen, Giles Rosbury, Bill Strietmann,  
Chris Vollmer, Randy Voss  
BREATHWORKERS AND LONG STRING PLAYERS.....Jon Brumit,  
Clem Fortuna, Eric Hubel, Daniel Jenatsch, Djeto Juncaj,  
Charlie McCutchens, Thollem McDonas, Marko Novachoff, Frank Pahl,  
Joel Peterson, Kurt Prisbe, Doug Shimmin  
METALINS.....Adam Alsnayyan, Patrick Behnke, Teresa Cirihal,  
Samantha Cooper, Karen Danke, Ian Emerson, Henrik Karapetyan, James Kujawski,  
Erin Little, Chris Morelli, Diana Nucera, Michael Rais, Melissa Roberts, Candice Smith,  
Scott Stefanko, Ben Temkow, Bethany Widmer  
PERCUSSION.....Ian Ding, Joe Gramley, Jacob Nissly, Nicholas Papador, Jonathan Ovalle  
TRASH PERCUSSION.....Jon Brummit, Brett Lee, Charlie McCutchens,  
Kurt Prisbe, Jay Rowe, Chris Turner  
SAXOPHONES.....Tracy Chesher, William J Conn, Jr., John Cummins,  
Noa Even, Jim Fusik, Jim Holden, Tim Holmes, David Huber, James Hughes,  
Joshua James, Sheldon Johnson, Justin Jozwiak, Keith Kaminsky,  
Elissa Kana, Erik Ronmark, Eric Schweizer  
SUONA.....Marko Novachcoff  
TROMBONES.....bugs Beddow, Dave Busch, Matt Davidson, Ken Grabowski,  
John Kachnowski, Bruce Sole, Laura Sullivan, Susana Woloson

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## CREW

### CREW

Directed by.....Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler  
Produced by.....Matthew Barney  
Written by.....Matthew Barney  
Music Composed by.....Jonathan Bepler  
Conductors.....Jonathan Bepler, Dan Sutton  
Assistant Director.....Tony Gerber  
Producer.....Mike Bellon  
Associate Producer, Detroit.....Christos Moisesides  
Production Design.....Matthew D. Ryle  
Music Production Supervisor.....Andrew Kramp  
Stage Managers.....Dave Shelley, Brett Finley  
Sound Supervisor.....Jeff Jones  
Foundry Design and Operation.....Casey Westbrook  
Foundry Design Team.....  
Caleb Plattner, Aaron McCaffrey, Jason Cole  
Production Design Coordinator.....Kanoa Baysa  
Production Design Team.....Jade Archuleta-Gans,  
Kanoa Baysa, Josh Bemelen, Michael Branning,  
Nate Green, Keith Riley, Matt Sochocki  
Stills Photographer.....Hugo Glendenning  
Technical Supervisor.....Chris Seguine  
Set Design.....Josh Bemelen, Michael Branning  
Music Instrument Development.....Daniel Jenatsch  
Costuming.....Jennifer Price  
Production Admin.....Sarah Demeuse, Jordan Rathus  
Graphic Design.....Keith Riley  
Wardrobe.....Kristi Burgett, Issac Richard,  
Stephany Sowards, Kath Strietmann  
Hair and Makeup.....Cheri Bertoncin,  
Andrea Deshanu, Crystal Palmer, Renata Stojcevski  
Chainmaille Fabrication.....Ericia Bartels,  
Christine Bossler, Alan Ardizzone  
Music Contractors.....Joel Peterson,  
Dominic Arellano  
Crime Scene Consultation.....Lt. John Morell,  
Lt. Sherri Meisel  
Furnace Safety Directors and Coordinators.....  
James Wade, Chido Johnson, John Rizzo  
Iron Furnace Operators.....  
Brad Allen, Todd Chapman, Jason Cole,  
Christopher Fachini, David Flaughner, Tobias  
Flores, Robert Gorowicz, Kate Hobby, Jason  
Kimes, Elizabeth Kronfield, Ryan Lamfers, Aaron  
McCaffery, Caleb Plattner, Vaughn Randall, Josh  
Reiman, Jono Retallick, John Rizzo, Kevin Shunn,  
Julie Ward, Casey Westbrook, Matt Wicker  
Iron Furnace Charge Crew.....  
Jose Chavez, Karen Donnellan, Layton Ehmke,  
Natalie Estep, Phillip Evans, Christopher Fachini,  
David Flaughner, Tobias Flores, Kyle Forgia, Robert  
Gorowicz, Sean Hages, Zak Helenske, Jason  
Kimes, Brittany Kinard, Francesca Lalanne-Jeune,  
Kieran Martin, Kevin McCoy, Aaron McNally,  
Shane Morgan, Jennifer Mosier, Stacey Rathert,  
Jono Retallick, Mary Catherine Richardson,  
Danielle Robinson, William Tiege, Pete Turner,  
Christopher Welles, Rachel Wolski  
Set Builders.....Natalie Estep, Christopher  
Fachini, David Flaughner, Robert Gorowicz, Kevin  
McCoy, Linus O'Leary, Finn Rosbury, Giles  
Rosbury, Joseph Sopkowicz, Dylan Spaysky  
Engineer.....Dennis Spors  
Equipment Operator.....Dennis Szulborski  
Tower Master Rigger / Stunt Coordinator.....  
Nick Cocciolone  
Tower Assistant Rigger.....Drew Derkaz  
Construction.....James Hood  
Crane Operators.....Mark Palmer, Mark Woods  
Magnet Crane Operator.....Julio Perez  
Dump Truck Driver.....Hazen Knox  
Scrap Handlers.....Robert Gleich, Julio Perez,  
Shawn Thorsrud  
Props.....Garrett Pappow  
Prod. Assistants.....Kate Dorris, Bethany Waldon  
Stage Management.....Lauren Ayles,  
Bob Bonnell, Joel Hale, John Lawson  
CSI Camera Operator.....Bryan Papierski  
Tug Boat.....Carolyn Hoey  
Tow Boat Operators.....Jason Elliot,  
Travis Ferguson, Jake Meinke, Mike Schwartz  
Engineers.....Robert Frederickson, Jon-Paul Kubala  
CSI Camera Operator.....Bryan Papierski  
Deckhand.....Tim Carpenter  
Interns.....Chris Apczynski, Ryan Jennings Clark,  
Aaron Dawson, Michelle Diem, Sjoerd Dijk,  
Douglas Ellis, Tom Friel, Dan Gizzie, Kimberly  
Hooper, Hana Kostis, Teal Louise, Curtis  
McGuire, Ryan L. Myers, Garrett Papow, Angela  
Pham, Kate Price, Erin Sweeney, Bob Turek,  
Bethany Waldon  
Music Interns Detroit.....Ryan Clark, Aaron  
Dawson, Tom Friel, Christina Hagan, Curtis  
McGuire, Joey Miri, Ryan Myers, Garrett Papow,  
Angela Pham, Dan Roberts, Derek Schultz, Erin  
Sweeny, Bob Turek, Bethany Waldon  
Music Interns Berlin.....Devon Caranicas,  
Sjoerd Dijk, Dan Gizzie, Teal Louise, Kate Price



## WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



REVEN KIRKMAN

### Aimee Mullins (*Isis*)

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



BARKER LOYZE

### Jennie Knaggs (*Nephthys*)

Jennie Knaggs is a singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist based in Detroit. She has performed extensively on the streets and stages of Europe and the United States performing a wide range of musical styles, from folk to opera. Previous projects include Swedish political street theatre troupe, *Skramsellhika*; pop Americana with a cappella quartet *Invisible Hands*; several traditional country groups; and New Wave operas with *The Atlantian Initiative* based in Berlin and the *Burning Man Opera* based in San Francisco. Knaggs studied Performing Arts and Community Development at Antioch College with a focus on art, music and theatre as tools for social change. Within this program she studied the culture and traditional music of the Appalachian region. She is the 2000 Hollerin' Champion of Wise County, Virginia and Letcher County, Kentucky. Current projects include *Lac La Belle*, a trio performing various styles of Americana, including old-time cowboy yodeling and western swing, alongside original tunes influenced by the traditional American song canon. Knaggs is guitarist, vocalist, and songwriter for the rock band *I, Crime* whose EP *Get The Knife* and 7 inch single "Dove Skin Gloves" was released by Woodbridge Records. She also performs as a back up vocalist and percussionist in the Detroit-based ten piece Nigerian pop group, *Old Afrobeat Orchestra*, led by Adeboye Adegbenro, a former bandmate to Fela Kuti. Knaggs recently completed a month long artist residency program at The Art Monastery in Labro, Italy, performing and teaching traditional American folk music. She can currently be found at her bi-monthly residency singing solo at D'Mongo's Speakeasy in downtown Detroit.



STEPHANIE ERBLE

### Eugene F. Perry (*Set*)

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

## WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



### Herbert Perry (*Set*)

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



JOYCELYN GOINS

### Belita Woods (*Factory Singer*)

Belita Woods is a Detroit-based singer and songwriter who has been a lead vocalist and writer for George Clinton and the P-Funk All Stars since 1990. Song credits include the current hit "Anybody Get Funked Up" and "True Love" on the album *Hey Man Smell My Finger*. Woods has three solo songs on the 2005 compilation album *George Clinton Presents the P-Funk All Stars: How Late Do U Have 2BB4UR Absent*: "Don't Dance Too Close" (written by Woods), "More Than Words Can Say" and "Saddest Day." Born in Chicago and raised in Southwest Detroit, Woods' musical career began in 1969 with the hit single "My Magic Corner," recorded for the Detroit label Moria Records. She recorded another song for Moria called "I Just Love You" and went on to become the house jazz vocalist for Club Mozambique in Watts. In the late 1970s, Woods recorded with the R&B group *Brainstorm* as the lead singer and song writer of such hits as "Lovin Is Really My Game," "This Must Be Heaven" and "I'll Make it Hot for You." Woods recorded three 12-inch singles in the 1980s with Ron Banks of the *Dramatics*: *Make it Easy on Yourself*, *Closer I Get To You*, and *The Christmas Song*. She sang lead with Norma Jean Bell at Club Axles in Detroit. More recently, Woods wrote the triple platinum hit "Getting It While the Getting Is Good" for the rapper Too Short. She has recorded songs for several film soundtracks such as "Black People" for *Panther*; "I Know the Man Needs Me" for the *Steels Law*; "Erotic City" for *P.C.U.*; and "Funk Em Just to See the Look on Their Face" for *The Breaks*, in which Woods had an appearing role.



MATT WISNALL

### Shara Worden (*Lieutenant Worden*)

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

## THANKS TO



ERIC WHEELER - DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

**The Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA)**, one of the premier art museums in the United States, is home to more than 60,000 works that comprise a multicultural survey of human creativity from ancient times through the 21st century. From the first van Gogh painting to enter a U.S. museum (*Self-Portrait*, 1887), to Diego Rivera's world-renowned *Detroit Industry* murals (1932–33), the DIA's collection is known for its quality, range, and depth. As the DIA celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2010, it does so with renewed commitment to its visitor-centered experience and to its mission of creating opportunities for all visitors to find personal meaning in art.



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CWELLE GODISH

**New Music Detroit** is a contemporary music collective made up of some of the city's most versatile and highly-trained musicians. NMD is dedicated to performing challenging and dynamic works from the late twentieth century to the present day. Since its inception in 2007, NMD has presented local and world premieres by an impressive array of composers from John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Luciano Berio, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass to contemporary voices from Georges Aperghis, Nico Muhly, Alexandra du Bois, Marc Mellits, and John

Zorn. NMD's founding members Ian Ding, Erik Rönmark, Robert Tye, Adrienne Rönmark, Gina DiBello and Daniel Bauch all hold permanent positions or close affiliations with such noted institutions as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the University of Michigan School of Music, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Minnesota Orchestra. Outside of their ongoing performances, NMD may be best known for the acclaimed festival Strange Beautiful Music now in its fifth year—a daylong marathon concert encompassing contemporary classical music, experimental jazz, “noise,” electronic music, and other avant-garde genres.

### Additional Thanks

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



### THERE WILL BE A PICNIC SUPPER FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF THE PERFORMANCE AT DETROIT STEEL

Shuttle buses will return everyone to their hotels afterwards

**Metro Cars**  
734-946-5700

**Metro Airport Taxi**  
1-800-745-5191

**GREEN CABS**  
1-877 476-8294

BA  
ACT 3 OF  
ANCIENT EVENINGS  
NEW YORK CITY  
SUMMER 2013

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inside front cover: *KHU: Isis and Osiris*, 2009  
back cover: *KHU Prologue* production still, 2009

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