Julia Wolfe / SITI Company / Bang on a Can All-Stars

Steel Hammer

Fri, Oct 23 at 8pm
Sat, Oct 24 at 8pm
Royce Hall

RUNNING TIME
115 minutes;
No intermission

There will be a post-show Q&A with members of the company following Oct 23 performance

Supported in part by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Endowment Fund

Directed by Anne Bogart
Music & Lyrics by Julia Wolfe
Original text by Kia Corthron, Will Power, Carl Hancock Rux and Regina Taylor
Music performed by Bang on a Can All-Stars
Play performed and created by SITI Company
Lighting Design by Brian H Scott**
Scenic & Costume Design by James Schuette**
Choreography by Barney O’Hanlon*
Sound Design by Andrew Cotton and Christian Frederickson
Production Stage Manager: Ellen Mezzera*
Assistant Stage Manager: Jason Pacella*
Assistant Director: Laura Sheedy
Directing Assistant: Jacob Sexton
SITI Company Executive Director: Michelle Preston
Bang on a Can Executive Director: Kenny Savelson

Photo by Michael Brasilow

MEDIA SPONSOR:
KCRW 89.3
Southern California Public Radio
MESSAGE FROM THE CENTER:

Some stories lend themselves to retelling. Some storytellers are deftly able to lend their considerable talents to reinterpreting and reimagining stories in such a way that not only sheds new light on stories we thought we knew, but embodies them in ways that allows us to examine the powerful reasons we continue to tell stories altogether.

Tonight’s performance is inspired by the tales of John Henry, a man who legendarily beat a machine that was poised to rob his livelihood. He beat the machine, or so it is told, but lost his life in the aftermath of his remarkable effort.

It is a modern secular parable, one that might just strike a chord within each of us. Our absolute and unrelenting connectedness to our modern labor thanks to a device-driven existence has opened us to new possibilities at the same time it yokes us to our responsibilities and even defines us by them in a manner we are often seeking to redefine.

Any time we put down our phones and push what is most likely a much-needed pause on the multitude of tasks that permeate our grey matter on a daily basis, we allow ourselves to re-invest in the power of story. To embrace our own curious natures—which is the greatest driving force of empathy for one another.

And for this endeavor, we are in exceptionally good hands tonight. as this traditional, even ubiquitous tale is told collaboratively in an expansive and eclectic way.

The collaborators of this piece of art, have come together in a very special manner, beginning with the alt-folk music of recent Pulitzer winner Julia Wolfe brought to life through the vast interpretive abilities of Bang on A Can All-Stars. The ever-astonishing and open-hearted performers of SITI Company worked together with the musicians to embody the characters of this tale, as explored more deeply by several of our most accomplished modern writers.

Tonight is also a story within a story. The story we will witness on the stage itself and the larger story of the art of collaboration, one that will be writ large and hopefully, linger within us long after the telling.

Cast:
Akiko Aizawa*
Eric Berryman*
Patrice Johnson Chevannes*
Gian-Murray Gianino*
Barney O’Hanlon*
Stephen Duff Webber*

BANG ON A CAN ALL-STARS
Ashley Bathgate, cello
Robert Black, bass
Vicky Chow, piano
David Cossin, percussion
Mark Stewart, electric guitar, mountain dulcimer, harmonica
Ken Thomson, clarinets, harmonica

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers of the United States.

**Member of the United Scenic Artists Union (USA).

Anne Bogart is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.

Steel Hammer the score was commissioned by Bang on a Can with generous support from Maria and Robert A. Skirnick and Carnegie Hall.

The play Steel Hammer premiered at Actors Theatre of Louisville in the 2014 Humana Festival of New American Plays with support from the National Endowment for the Arts. Additionally, production elements for Steel Hammer were created by Actors Theatre of Louisville.

The dramatized stage production of Steel Hammer featuring SITI Company and Bang on a Can All-Stars was developed and premiered at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts/University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and was commissioned by the Krannert Center and by BAM for the 2015 Next Wave Festival.
Julia Wolfe (composer): Steel Hammer was inspired by my love for the legends and music of Appalachia. The text was culled from the over 200 versions of the John Henry ballad. The various versions, based on hearsay, recollection, and tall tales, explore the subject of human versus machine in the quintessential American legend. Many of the facts are unclear: some say he’s from West Virginia; some say he’s from South Carolina; some say he’s from New Jersey. But regardless of the details, John Henry, wielding a steel hammer, faces the onslaught of the industrial age as his super-human strength is challenged in a contest to out-dig an engine.

I drew upon the extreme variations of the story, fragmenting and weaving the contradictory versions of the ballad that have circulated since the late 1800s into a new whole – at times meditating on single words or phrases – in order to tell the story of the story and to embody the simultaneous diverse paths it traveled. The Bang on a Can All-Stars add a chorus of instruments including mountain dulcimer, wooden bones, banjo, harmonica, and body percussion, and are joined by a trio of three female voices.

Anne Bogart (director): Steel Hammer traces the trajectory of a powerful story passed from one generation to next, a fable pitting the work of a man against a machine. John Henry, a railroad worker, equipped with only a steel-driving hammer, raced in a competition against a powerful steam engine to tunnel through a mountain. He won the race and became a folk hero but lost his life in the process. This poignant tale of human struggle survived in ballads, songs and poetry and it travelled from one person to the next through time and across many territories. Perhaps the story of John Henry was a cautionary tale that warned other railroad workers to slow down in order to survive. Possibly it was based upon a real man or was an amalgamation of different individual struggles of African Americans in the post civil war period.

Julia Wolfe originally composed Steel Hammer as an oratorio inspired by her love of the Appalachian music tradition and the many faceted stories of John Henry. She drew inspiration from both the music and oral traditions of the Appalachian region, using a chorus of instruments including mountain dulcimers, wooden bones, banjo, steel hammers and more. The Bang on a Can All-Stars have performed Steel Hammer in concert at many music venues around the country. Julia and I wanted to work together and the prospect of expanding Steel Hammer into a music-theater piece delighted both of us.

Our production explores two basic themes: the ancient human necessity for telling stories and the cost of hard labor on the body and the spirit. We began by asking questions about both subjects: Why do we tell stories? How do stories work? Who owns a story? How do stories travel through time? What is the function of stories in society? Are we too easily slaves to ambition and striving? Do we live in an era where work is killing us? Is the 24-hour electronic connection creating more useless work than it is purporting to alleviate? We wonder whether we are currently pitted against the machine in an even more insidious way than John Henry?

For thousands of years humans have stood in front of one another to tell stories. This impulse to use spoken narrative to explain and shape our life experiences lies at the heart of Steel Hammer. I invited playwrights Kia Corthron, Carl Hancock Rux, Will Power and Regina Taylor to each write their version of the John Henry story and we wove their work into the fabric of Steel Hammer.

What you will experience tonight is a meeting of hearts, minds and bodies: Julia Wolfe’s extraordinary music composition, the brilliance of the Bang on a Can All-Stars, the fluency of four remarkable playwrights and the shared sensibilities of SITI Company’s actors and designers.
TEXTS

SPOKEN:
Tunnel Tale by Kia Corthron
Migrant Mamie Remembers John Henry by Carl Hancock
Rux
John Henry, Polly Ann by Will Power
John by Regina Taylor

SUNG:
Steel Hammer lyrics by Julia Wolfe

SOME SAY
Some say he's from
some say he
some say he's from
some say
some say he
say he
he

THE STATES
Georgia
Tennessee
Columbus, Ohio
Kentucky
Alabama
New Jersey
Yew Pine Mountains
Mississippi
Mountain
West Virginia
South Carolina

DESTINY
John Henry
was a little boy
sitting on his papa's knee
John Henry
was a little man
sitting on his mama's knee
a baby boy
sitting on his daddy's knee
John Henry
he said, "I'm gonna be a steel drivin’ man."
He picked up his hammer and a little piece of steel
He said, "This hammer's gonna be the death of me."

MOUNTAIN
The mountain was so tall
John Henry was so small

CHARACTERISTICS
He was small
He was tall
He was black
He was white
He was true
He was false
He was two hundred pounds
He was two twenty-five
He’s a worker
Convict
Singer
Thirty-five years
Twenty-two
Fifty
Cotton picker

Steel Driver (hammer, hammer, steel, steel)
He was true
He was false
He was six feet tall
He was five foot one
He was tall
He was small
He was small
He was tall

POLLY ANN
John Henry had a little woman
And her name was
Polly Ann, Mary Ann, Julie Ann, Sary Ann, Sally Ann,
Martha Ann, Liza Ann, Lucy Ann,
Mary Magdelena, Magdelena
John Henry had a little woman
and she was all dressed in blue,
dressed in red,
red, blue, black
John Henry's woman said to him,
"My darling Johnny, I've been true."
true to you, true to you
John Henry had a little woman
and her name was Ida Red,
and her name was Liza Jane,
and her name was Maggadee,
Polly Ann, Mary Ann, Julie Ann, Sary Ann, Sally Ann,
Martha Ann, Liza Ann, Lucy Ann,
Mary Magdelena, Magdelena
Ida Red, Maggadee, Liza Jane,
Polly
When John Henry he took sick to bed,
then Polly drove steel just like a man.

THE RACE
The captain told John Henry
“gonna bring that steam drill ‘round”
John Henry told the captain
“a man ain’t nothin’ but a man”
nothin’, nothin’, nothin’
but a man, but a man
John Henry on the right side
the steam drill’s on the left
right, left, right, left
“Before I let your steam drill beat me down,
I’ll hammer my fool self to death.”
nine pound hammer
ten pound hammer
discussion is not valid
twenty pound hammer
two nine pound hammers
two twenty pound hammers
sixteen pound hammer
hammer, hammer, hammer, hammer

WINNER
The man that invented the steam drill,
he thought he was mighty fine.
John Henry sunk the steel fourteen feet,
while the steam drill only made nine,
Lord Lord,

LORD LORD
Lord Lord
This old hammer rings like silver
This old hammer shines like gold
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Anne Bogart (Director)
Anne Bogart is one of the three Co-Artistic Directors of SITI Company, which she founded with Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki in 1992. She is a Professor at Columbia University where she runs the Graduate Directing Program. Works with SITI include: the theater is a blank page; Persians; Steel Hammer; A Rite; Café Variations; Trojan Women; American Document; Antigone; Under Construction; Freshwater; Who Do You Think You Are; Radio Macbeth; Hotel Cassiopeia; Death and the Ploughman; La Dispute; Score; bobrauschenbergamerica; Room; War of the Worlds; Cabin Pressure; War of the Worlds – The Radio Play; Alice's Adventures; Culture of Desire; Bob; Going, Going, Gone; Small Lives/Big Dreams; The Medium; Noel Coward's Hay Fever and Private Lives; August Strindberg's Miss Julie; and Charles Mee's Orestes. She is the author of five books: A Director Prepares; The Viewpoints Book; And Then, You Act; Conversations with Anne; and What's the Story.

Julia Wolfe (Composer)
Composer Julia Wolfe is the winner of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her oratorio Anthracite Fields based on life in the Pennsylvania coal mines and a recipient of a 2015 Herb Alpert Award in the Arts. A CD of Anthracite Fields was released in fall 2015 on Cantaloupe Music to critical acclaim. Wolfe draws inspiration from folk, classical, and rock genres, bringing a modern sensibility to each while simultaneously tearing down the walls between them. Recent works include her body concerto riSE and fLY performed by Colin Currie and BBC Orchestra, and Anthracite Fields which will receive its west coast premiere with the LA Masters Chorale at Disney Hall and its European premiere in Scandinavia in spring 2016. Recent recordings include Steel Hammer, Cruel Sister, and Dark Full Ride, on the Cantaloupe label. Wolfe has collaborated with theater artist Anna Deavere Smith, filmmaker Bill Morrison, director Francois Girard, scenic designer Jeff Sugg, and choreographer Susan Marshall, among others. Julia Wolfe is Professor of Music Composition at the Steinhardt School at NYU. She is cofounder/artistic director of the new music collective Bang on a Can.

Kia Corthron (Playwright)
Kia Corthron was most recently awarded a Windham Campbell Prize for Drama, the USArtists Jane Addams Fellowship, and the Simon Great Plains Playwright Award (Honored Playwright). Plays have been produced in New York by Playwrights Horizons, Ensemble Studio Theatre, NY Theatre Workshop, Atlantic, Manhattan Theatre Club, American Place; in London by the Royal Court and Donmar Warehouse; and regionally by Minneapolis' Children's Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Alabama Shakespeare, Yale Rep, Huntington, NY Stage & Film, Baltimore's Center Stage, Goodman, Hartford Stage and elsewhere. Other theatre awards include the Lee Reynolds Award, NEA, McKnight National Residency, and Bellagio residency, and in television she was awarded Writers Guild and Edgar awards for The Wire. In January her first novel, The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter, will be published by Seven Stories Press. She serves on the Dramatists Guild Council, is a member of the Authors Guild, and is a New Dramatists alumnus.

Will Power (Playwright)
Will Power is an award-winning playwright and performer. Plays include Stagger Lee (Dallas Theater Center), Fetch Clay, Make Man (New York Theatre Workshop, Marin Theatre Company, Roundhouse Theatre, True Colors), Steel Hammer with SITI Company (Humana Festival, upcoming Brooklyn Academy of Music), The Seven (Lucille Lortel Award Best Musical, New York Theatre Workshop, La Jolla Playhouse), Five Fingers of Funk! (Children's Theatre Company), Honey Bo and The Goldmine (La Jolla Playhouse) and two internationally acclaimed solo shows The Gathering, and Flow. Power's numerous awards include a United States Artist Prudential Fellowship, and the TCG Peter Zeisler Memorial Award. Power's numerous film and television appearances include The Steven Colbert Report (Comedy Central), and Bill Moyers on Faith and Reason (PBS). Mr. Power was a guest of the U.S. State Department on five separate occasions, traveling to South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan. On these trips and others, Mr. Power taught community workshops in shantytowns, worked with poets in former regimes of the Soviet Union, and lectured at various libraries, grammar schools, and colleges. Power is currently on the faculty at The Meadows School of the Arts/SMU, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence with the Dallas Theater Center.
Carl Hancock Rux (Playwright)

Carl Hancock Rux's work has been presented at McCarter Theatre Center, the Walker Art Center, Penumbra Theatre, and Off-Broadway at Lincoln Center Theater, The Public Theater, Playwrights Horizons, 651 Arts and BAM's Next Wave Festival. Rux's work has also been produced at Maison des arts de Créteil, Montclair State College, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Esplanade Theatre of Singapore, Scuola di Danzi Mimma Testa in Trastevere, and Teatro de natal infantil Raffaelly Beligni. Rux has received an Obie Award, an Alpert Award in the Arts, and a New York Press Club Journalism Award for Entertainment News. He is a New York Foundation for the Arts Gregory Millard Fellow, as well as the recipient of a NYFA Prize a CINE Golden Eagle Film and Video Award. Published works include Pagan Operetta (SemioText), the ObIE Award winning play Talk (TCG) and Asphalt (Simon & Schuster). Mr. Rux's play The Exalted (BAM Next Wave 2015) is also directed by Anne Bogart.

Regina Taylor (Playwright)

With a body of work that encompasses film, television, theater and writing, Regina Taylor's playwriting credits include Crowns (four Helen Hayes awards), Trinity River Plays (Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award), Oo-Blä-Dee (American Critics' Association new play award), Drowning Crow (Broadway, Manhattan Theater Club), The Dreams of Sarah Breedlove, Escape from Paradise, Ties that Bind and stop. reset., which she also directed at NYC's Signature Theatre Company and Goodman Theatre. Taylor is an Artistic Associate of the Goodman Theatre and a resident playwright at Signature Theatre.

Barney O’Hanlon (Choreographer and Ensemble)

Barney O’Hanlon has been collaborating with Anne Bogart since 1986 and joined the SITI Company in 1994. He most recently choreographed Verdi’s Macbeth for the Glimmerglass Festival directed by Anne Bogart. He also choreographed Anne Washburn’s 10 out of 12 at Soho Rep. directed by Les Waters, Charles Mee’s The Glory of The World for the Humana Festival also directed by Les Waters, and Sarah Ruhl’s The Oldest Boy for Lincoln Center Theater directed by Rebecca Taichman. International: Dublin Theatre Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Prague Quadrennial, MC93 Bobigny (France), Bonn Biennial, Festival Iberoamericano (Bogota, Colombia), Kildeeskop Theatre (Copenhagen, Denmark). New York: BAM’s Next Wave Festival, The Public Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, PS 122, Dance Theater Workshop and New York Live Arts. Opera: New

Brian H Scott (Lighting Designer)

Brian H Scott hails from New York City. Brian is a SITI Company member and has designed lighting for Café Variations, Trojan Women (After Euripides), Antigone, American Document in collaboration with the Martha Graham Dance Company, Under Construction, Who Do You Think You Are, Hotel Cassiopeia, Death and the Ploughman, bobrauschenbergamerica (Henry Hewes Design Award 2004), War of the Worlds – The Radio Play, Macbeth, and a dance collaboration with the musical group Rachel's on systems/layers. Additionally, he has had the pleasure of assisting Mimi Jordan Sherin on Bob; Cabin Pressure; War of the Worlds; The Medium; Small Live/Big Dreams; Going, Going, Gone; Miss Julie; Private Lives; Alice’s Adventures; Culture of Desire; and The Adding Machine. With Christopher Akerlind on SITI productions: Room, Score and A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

James Schuette (Scenic and Costume Designer)

James has designed scenery and/or costumes for over 17 SITI Company productions. His work has been seen at American Repertory Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, BAM, Berkeley Rep, Classic Stage, Court Theatre, Goodman Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Long Wharf Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Manhattan Theatre Club, McCarter Theatre, NY Live Arts, New York Theatre Workshop, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Papermill Playhouse, Playwrights Horizons, The Public Theatre/NY Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Rep, Steppenwolf, Signature Theatre, Trinity Rep, Vineyard Theatre, Wexner Center, Yale Rep, Boston Lyric Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Chicago Opera Theatre, Glimmerglass Opera, Houston Grand Opera, LA Opera, Minnesota Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Theatre of St Louis, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera Seattle Opera, and internationally.

James has designed scenery and/or costumes for over 17 SITI Company productions. His work has been seen at American Repertory Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, BAM, Berkeley Rep, Classic Stage, Court Theatre, Goodman Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Long Wharf Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Manhattan Theatre Club, McCarter Theatre, NY Live Arts, New York Theatre Workshop, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Papermill Playhouse, Playwrights Horizons, The Public Theatre/NY Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Rep, Steppenwolf, Signature Theatre, Trinity Rep, Vineyard Theatre, Wexner Center, Yale Rep, Boston Lyric Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Chicago Opera Theatre, Glimmerglass Opera, Houston Grand Opera, LA Opera, Minnesota Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Theatre of St Louis, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera Seattle Opera, and internationally.
York City Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Washington National Opera, and Opera Omaha. SITI Company collaborations: American Document with the Martha Graham Dance Company, A Rite with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, and the event of a thread with visual artist Ann Hamilton.

Andrew Cotton (Sound Designer)
In his role as designer, tour manager and engineer, Andrew Cotton works closely with both composers and musicians in creating new works. Cotton works closely with several major London producers, specializing in contemporary music series with artists and concert series as diverse as Elvis Costello & John Harle, the BBC Promenade Series, Meltdown, George Russell, Carla Bley, & Talvin Singh. He collaborates with composers Michael Gordon, Julia Wolfe & David Long on their pieces for the All-Stars as well as large ensemble, dance & theatre pieces. He also acts as technical manager and sound collaborator with percussionist Evelyn Glennie DBE.

Christian Frederickson (Sound Designer)
Christian Frederickson is a violist, composer, and sound designer living in New York. He is a frequent collaborator with SITI Company, writing music and designing sound for Steel Hammer, Trojan Women (After Euripides), Antigone, 365 Days/365 Plays, and systems/layers. Frederickson is a founding member of the band Rachel's, who released 6 albums on Touch and Go/Quarterstick Records and toured widely in the United States, Europe, and South Korea. He is a graduate of The Peabody Conservatory and The Juilliard School. Other selected credits are: The Master Builder (BAM); Glory of the World, At the Vanishing Point, Romeo and Juliet, The Edge of Our Bodies, and The Tempest (Actors Theatre of Louisville); A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Unnatural Acts, Three Sisters, and The Tempest (Classic Stage Company); Through the Yellow Hour (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater - 2013 Drama Desk Nomination); The Painted Bird Trilogy (The Wexner Center); The Emperor Jones (Irish Repertory Theater - Lortel Nomination); The Awake (59E59 - NYIT award). www.christianfrederickson.com

Ellen Mezzera (Production Stage Manager)
Originally from San Francisco, Ms. Mezzera now resides in New York City. Broadway: The Lion King, Annie, Les Misérables, Matilda. New York: Gentlemen Prefer Blondes with New York City Center Encores; Macbeth and A Man’s a Man with Classic Stage Company; Shen Wei Dance Arts at the Park Avenue Armory. Regional: Steel Hammer at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Persians at The Getty Villa, the theater is a blank page at the Wexner Center for the Arts. Mezzera has toured internationally through China, Georgia, Hong Kong, Italy, Romania, Slovenia, and Switzerland. Additional credits: Mezzera had the opportunity to work on The Sound of Music Live! (NBC Universal) and the 2015 Tony Awards. Education: MFA, Columbia University, BA, Gonzaga University. AEA and Local 764.

Jason Pacella (Assistant Stage Manager)

Michelle Preston (SITI Company Executive Director)
Michelle Preston holds an M.F.A. in performing arts management from Brooklyn College and a B.F.A. in dance performance from Northern Illinois University. She began her career in arts administration at the Columbus Symphony Orchestra before coming to New York where she worked as a fundraiser for modern dance companies such as Urban Bush Women and the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. Prior to coming to SITI, she spent nearly three years as the Manager of Planning & Projects for the School of American Ballet. She has served on the board of Immediate Medium since 2009, was a participant in the 2011 Arts Leadership Institute hosted by the Arts and Business Council of New York and has served as a panelist for the Brooklyn Arts Council regrant program and the TCG Global Connections grant. She is an active member of the Brooklyn College Arts Management alumni group, the New York chapter of Women in Development, and the Emerging Leaders of New York Arts — a program of the Arts and Business Council of New York.

Kenny Savelson (Bang on a Can Executive Director)
Kenny Savelson has managed the creation, production, and touring of all of Bang on a Can’s current programs since 1997 and has produced over 30 Bang on a Can Marathon concerts at venues throughout New York City, the US and internationally. He has developed and/or booked the Bang on a Can All-Stars’ touring projects in the US and internationally since 1998 including the group’s annual New York concert appearances at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall and its acclaimed collaborations with many of the most celebrated artists in contemporary music such as Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Meredith Monk, Terry Riley, Don Byron, Ornette Coleman, Brian Eno, Cecil Taylor, and more. Staged production credits include A House in Bali (Cal Performances 2009, BAM Next Wave Festival 2010), Lightening at our feet (BAM Next Wave 2008), Lost Objects (BAM Next Wave 2004), The Carbon Copy Building (Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, Settembre Musica Torino 2000), among others. Together with Bang on a Can artistic directors Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe, Savelson is a co-founder of Cantaloupe Music, an independent record label with over 60 recordings released since 2001.

PERFORMERS

Akiko Aizawa (Ensemble)

Ashley Bathgate (Cello)
American cellist Ashley Bathgate has been described as an “eloquent new music interpreter” (New York Times) and “a rising star of her instrument” (Albany Times Union) who combines “bittersweet lyricism along with ferocious chops” (New York Magazine). Her “impish ferocity”, “rich tone” and “imaginative phrasing” (New York Times) have made her one of the most sought after performers of her time. The desire to create a dynamic energy exchange with her audience and build upon the ensuing chemistry is a pillar of Bathgate’s philosophy. Her affinity to
dynamism drives Bathgate to venture into previously uncharted areas of sounds and techniques, breaking the mold of a cello’s traditional voice. Collaborators and fans alike describe her vitality as remarkable and magical. She is a member of the award winning, internationally acclaimed sextet, Bang on a Can All-Stars, as well as two chamber groups of which she is a founding member: TwoSense and Bonjour.

Eric Berryman (Ensemble)
Off-Broadway: pool, no water at Barrow Street Theater. Regional theater credits include: Steel Hammer and Glory of the World at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Humana Festival; The Amen Corner at the Guthrie Theater; Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom at The Kennedy Center; I Wish You Love at Hartford Stage, Penumbra Theatre and The Kennedy Center; Fly at Ford’s Theatre; Red, Topdog/Underdog and A Raisin in the Sun at Everyman Theatre (resident company member); The History Boys at Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theatre; Persians at Getty Villa; The Dangerous House of Pretty Mbane at InterAct Theatre. International credits include: Medea (Australia); Elegies for Angels, Punks, and Raging Queens (England) and the Bunraku puppet play Hidagakawa Iriazakawa (Iida, Japan). Additional credits: BFA from Carnegie Mellon University. Less-sac Practitioner. Awards: Arthur Kennedy Acting Award and Leonore Annenberg Fellowship.

Robert Black (Bass)
Robert Black tours the world creating unheard of music for the solo double bass. He collaborates with the most adventurous composers, musicians, dancers, artists, actors, and technophiles from all walks of life. He has commissioned, collaborated, or performed with musicians from John Cage to D.J. Spooky, Elliott Carter to Meredith Monk, Cecil Taylor to young emerging composers, as well as the Brazilian painter Ige D’Aquino, Japanese choreographer Yoshiko Churna, the American actor Kathryn Walker, the English sound artist/DJ, Mira Calix and Swiss-American film maker, Rudy Burckhardt. Robert Black is a founding member of the Bang on a Can All-Stars, and he maintains a full teaching schedule at The Hartt School at the University of Hartford, the Festival Eleazar de Carvalho (Brazil), and the Manhattan School of Music’s Contemporary Performance Program. His current project, titled Possessed, is a series of solo improvisatory outdoor performances in Utah’s rugged canyon/desert landscape, which will be released in DVD and CD format on Cantaloupe Records in 2016. Other projects include Modern American Bass (New World Records 2011), State of the Bass (O.O. Discs), The Complete Bass Music of Christian Wolff (Mode Records), The Complete Bass Music of Giacinto (Mode Records). Robert has also recorded for Sony Classical, Point/Polygram, Cantaloupe, Koch International, CRI, Opus One, Artifact Recordings, Folksway Records, and others. www.robertblack.org

Patrice Johnson Chevannes (Ensemble)
Patrice Johnson Chevannes is an award-winning actress whose Broadway credits include The Crucible opposite Liam Neeson and Laura Linney, both directed by Sir Richard Eyre. Her credits include Tamburlaine directed by Sir Michael Boyd ( Theatre for a New Audience); Steel Hammer directed by Anne Bogart (Actors Theatre of Louisville, upcoming in the fall at BAM); Desdemona, opposite Patrick Stewart, in Othello; Familiar (Yale Rep); Banished Children of Eve (Irish Rep); The Devils (New York Theatre Workshop); and All’s Well That Ends Well ( The Public Theater). Patrice received an Audelco nomination for Angelique, an Audelco Award for for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf and a 2010 Barrymore nomination for Best Actress in Coming Home (The Wilma Theater). Additional film and television credits include Undertow, The Guardian, ER, and Without a Trace, among others. Patrice has directed three award-winning feature films through her company God-And-All-O-Wee Productions: Kings County, NY’s Dirty Laundry and Hill and Gully, currently on the festival circuit.
Vicky Chow (Piano & Keyboards)
Canadian pianist Vicky Chow has been described as “brilliant” (New York Times) and “one of the new stars of new music” (Los Angeles Times). Joining the All-Stars in 2009, she is now also a member of New Music Detroit, X&8, and GRANDBAND. Two recent recordings include her innovative recording of Steve Reich’s ‘Piano Counterpoint’ released on Nonesuch records and Tristan Perich’s epic hour-long ‘Surface Image’ for solo piano and 40 channel 1-bit electronics on New Amsterdam Records. Her next projects include commissions from American composers Chris Cerrone, Molly Joyce and Canadian composers Adam Basanta and Jocelyn Morlock. Chow also produces and curates “Contagious Sounds”, a new music series focusing on adventurous contemporary artists and composers in New York City. She receives continuous support from the Canada Council for the Arts and has received grants from the Aaron Copland Fund, Yvar Mikhashoff Trust, Fromm Foundation, Vancouver Foundation, and the BC Arts Council. Originally from Vancouver Canada, Chow studied at The Juilliard School with Yoheved Kaplinsky and Julian Martin before continuing studies at Manhattan School of Music with Christopher Oldfather. She made her orchestral debut at the age of 10 with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and made her NY orchestral debut appearance at Alice Tully Hall with the Juilliard Symphony. Vicky Chow is based in Brooklyn. www.vickychow.com

David Cossin (Percussion)
David Cossin was born and raised in Queens, New York, and studied classical percussion at the Manhattan School of Music. His interest in classical percussion, drum set, non-western hand drumming, composition, and improvisation has led to performances across a broad spectrum of musical and artistic forms to incorporate new media with percussion. David has recorded and performed internationally with composers and ensembles including Steve Reich and Musicians, Philip Glass, Yo-Yo Ma, Meredith Monk, Tan Dun, Cecil Taylor, Taku Jensen Percussion Quartet, and the trio, Real Quiet. Numerous theater projects include collaborations with Blue Man Group, Mabou Mines, and director Peter Sellars. David was featured as the percussion soloist in Tan Dun’s Grammy and Oscar winning score to Ang Lee’s film Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. David is also happy to have worked with Sting on his world tour: Symphonicity. David has performed as a soloist with orchestras throughout the world including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Orchestra Radio France, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Sao Paulo State Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Gothenburg Symphony, Hong Kong Symphony, and the Singapore Symphony. David ventures into other art forms include sonic installations, which have been presented in New York, Italy and Germany. David is the curator for the Sound Res Festival, an experimental music festival in southern Italy and also teaches percussion at Queens College in New York City. www.davidcossin.com

Emily Eagen (Voice)
Emily Eagen is a versatile singer who performs in a variety of styles ranging from baroque to folk to avant garde. She studied early and contemporary music in the Hague, and moved to New York in 2007. Emily sings with the M6: Meredith Monk Music Third Generation, toured for several years with the eclectic vocal ensemble moira smiley and VOCO, and has worked with artists ranging from Sufjan Stevens to Mandy Patinkin to Gyan Riley. She is a regular faculty member at the Amherst Early Music Festival (CT) and the Augusta Heritage Center (WV), and is a teaching artist for Carnegie Hall. Also a two-time International Whistling Champion, Emily can be heard whistling, singing, and playing the ukulele with the Brooklyn blues and old-time band The Whistling Wolves.

Katie Geissinger (Voice)
Katie’s previous work with Julia Wolfe includes Steel Hammer at MASS MoCA and the Obie Award-winning The Carbon Copy Building (Cantaloupe), co-composed by Bang on a Can composers Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe. Katie is a long-time member of Meredith Monk’s Vocal Ensemble, with whom she tours staged productions and concerts worldwide, and regularly records (including the Grammy-nominated Impermanence). Recent performances include On Behalf of Nature at BAM and in San Francisco, and several concerts in Brazil and at Carnegie Hall. Previous performances at Carnegie include Bach’s Magnificat, the Witch in Honegger’s Le roi David, and Einstein on the Beach (Elektra Nonesuch). Katie also appeared at BAM in Bach’s St. Matthew Passion (Jonathan Miller, dir.); Broadway credits include Coram Boy and La Boheme (Baz Luhrmann, dir.).

Gian-Murray Gianino (Ensemble)
As a member of SITI, Mr. Gianino has helped created roles in the theater is a blank page, Persians, Café Variations, Trojan Women (After Euripides), Radio Macbeth, bobrauschenbergamerica, systems/layers, and Freshwater. New York credits include work at BAM, Second Stage, Signature Theatre, The Public Theater, The Women’s Project, SoHo Rep, and HERE Arts. He has performed regionally and internationally including at Yale Rep, Arena Stage, Actors Theatre of Louisville (Humana Festival), Berkshire Theatre Festival, Penguin Rep, Getty Villa (LA), The Court (Chicago), Krannert Center, Walker Art Center, Wexner Center, MC93 Bobigny (Paris, France), Bonn Biennale, Dublin Theatre Festival and GIFT festival (Tbilisi, Georgia). TV/Film credits include White Collar, Law & Order, Law & Order: SVU, All My Children, Dead Canaries and Hospitality. B.A. Wesleyan University. Acting Apprentice, ATL. G.M. is the third generation of a New York theater family. Member of the Actors Center.

Molly Quinn (Voice)
Molly Quinn has captivated audiences with her “radiant” soprano, possessing an “arresting sweetness and simplicity” (NY Times) in diverse repertoire ranging from Monteverdi to the Rolling Stones. She is a soloist on Trinity Choir’s GRAMMY® nominated recording of Handel’s Israel in Egypt, and has appeared with them in London, Moscow, and Paris and joined them in singing back up for The Rolling Stones at The Barclay Center. Ms. Quinn has been a long-time collaborator with TENET. The ensemble is currently recording a follow up album to 2013’s critically acclaimed Uno + One: Italia Nostra. Having strong roots in the music of Appalachia and Ireland, Ms Quinn has performed in the programs Come to the River with Apollo’s Fire and The Music of Dublin with The Folger Consort. Ms. Quinn was a 2013 season Adams Fellows at the Carmel Bach Festival and holds a Masters in Vocal Performance from CCM. www.mollyquinn.com

Mark Stewart (Guitar, Mountain dulcimer, Harmonica)
Raised in America’s Dairy Land of Wisconsin, multi-instrumentalist, singer, composer and instrument designer Mark Stewart has been heard around the world performing old and new music. Going to conservatory to study both guitar and cello, he came to NYC to work as a performer on both instruments; however upon completing school he was most drawn to the electric guitar. Today Mark plays regularly with a wide range of musicians: since 1998 he has recorded, toured and been Musical Director with Paul Simon. A founding member of the Bang on a Can All-Stars, Mark is also a member of Steve Reich & Musicians and the comic duo Polygraph Lounge with keyboard & theremin wizard Rob Schwimmer and has performed with Anthony Braxton, Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder, Bruce Springsteen,
Bobby McFerrin, Paul McCartney, the Everly Brothers, David Byrne, & James Taylor. Mark has collaborated extensively with composer Elliot Goldenthal on music for the feature films The Tempest, Across the Universe, Titus, The Butcher Boy, The Good Thief, In Dreams, and Heat, often playing instruments of his own design and construction. He is on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music & his New York “lab” is home to an instrument workshop and sonic salon where traditional and new instruments cohabitate. He lives in New York City making his living playing and writing popular music, semi-popular music and unpopular music.

Ken Thomson (Clarinets, Harmonica)
Ken Thomson is a Brooklyn-based clarinetist, saxophonist, and composer. In demand as a composer and freelancer in many settings, he moves quickly between genres and scenes, bringing a fiery intensity and emotional commitment to every musical situation; Time Out NY called him “the hardest-working saxophonist in new-music show business.” In addition to the All-Stars, Ken has been an anchoring force with Bang on a Can as music director and saxophonist with Asphalt Orchestra and as a faculty member of Bang on a Can’s Summer Music Festival at MASS MoCA. With his quintet, Slow/Fast, he has toured and released two discs including Settle (NCP East Records, 2014) about which the Chicago Reader said, “Few musicians travel as assuredly and meaningfully between jazz and new music,” and The New York Times wrote, “Mr. Thomson’s compositions are intricately wrought and incident-steeped.” His 2013 CD, Thaw (Cantaloupe Music), of his compositions performed by the heralded JACK Quartet was called the #1 Classical CD of 2013 by Rhapsody.com and listed on NPR’s “Top 10 Songs Public Radio Can’t Stop Playing.” As a composer, he has been commissioned by the American Composers Orchestra, Bang on a Can, Doug Perkins, and others, and has received awards from ASCAP and NewMusic USA. He is a Conn-Selmer/Selmer Paris and D’Addario Woodwinds Artist. www.ktonline.net

Stephen Duff Webber (Ensemble)
Mr. Webber has performed with SITI all over the world since 1994 in Persians; Steel Hammer; A Rite; Café Variations; American Document; Antigone; Radio Macbeth (Macbeth); Hotel Cassiopeia; Under Construction; Freshwater; Death and the Ploughman; War of the Worlds (Orson Welles); bobrauschenbergamerica; systems/layers (with Rachel’s); La Dispute; A Midsummer Night’s Dream; Cabin Pressure; Going, Going, Gone; Culture of Desire; The Medium; Private Lives; Hay Fever; War of the Worlds – The Radio Play (Orson Welles) and Short Stories. New York: Death and the Ploughman (Classic Stage Company), War of the Worlds, Hotel Cassiopeia, A Rite (BAM), Culture of Desire (New York Theatre Workshop), Trojan Women 2.0 (En Garde Arts), Freshwater (Women’s Project Theater), The Golden Dragon (Play Company), Radio Macbeth (The Public Theater), American Document (Joyce Theater), Antigone (New York Live Arts) and Radio Play (Joe’s Pub). Regional: American Repertory Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville (Betrayal, Glengarry Glen Ross), Milwaukee Repertory Theater, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, Portland Stage Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Court Theatre and Stage West.

Bang on a Can
Founded in 1987 by composers Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe, Bang on a Can has been creating an international community dedicated to innovative music, wherever it is found, and has grown from a one-day New York-based Marathon concert to a multi-faceted performing arts organization with a broad range of year-round international activities. Current projects include the annual Bang on a Can Marathon; The People’s Commissioning Fund, a membership program to commission emerging composers; the Bang on a Can All-Stars, who tour to major festivals and concert venues around the world every year; recording projects; the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival- a professional development program for young composers and performers led by today’s pioneers of experimental music; Asphalt Orchestra, Bang on a Can’s extreme street band that offers mobile performances re-contextualizing unusual music; Found Sound Nation, a new technology-based musical outreach program now partnering with the State Department of the United States of America to create OneBeat, a revolutionary, post-political residency program that uses music to bridge the gulf between young American musicians and young musicians from developing countries; cross-disciplinary collaborations and projects with DJs, visual artists, choreographers, filmmakers and more. Each new project has evolved to answer specific challenges faced by today’s musicians, composers and audiences, in order to
make innovative music widely accessible and wildly received. Bang on a Can’s inventive and aggressive approach to programming and presentation has created a large and vibrant international audience made up of people of all ages who are rediscovering the value of contemporary music.

Formed in 1992, the Bang on a Can All-Stars are recognized worldwide for their ultra-dynamic live performances and recordings of today’s most innovative music. Freely crossing the boundaries between classical, jazz, rock, world and experimental music, this six-member amplified ensemble has consistently forged a distinct category-defying identity, taking music into uncharted territories. Together, the All-Stars have worked in unprecedented close collaboration with some of the most important and inspiring musicians of our time, including Steve Reich, Ornette Coleman, the virtuoso Chinese singer Gong Linna, Tan Dun, DJ Spooky, and many more. The group’s celebrated projects include their landmark recording of Brian Eno’s ambient classic *Music for Airports* as well as live performances with Philip Glass, Meredith Monk, Don Byron, Iva Bittova, Thurston Moore, Terry Riley and others.

Recent project highlights include the premiere performances and recording of Julia Wolfe’s Pulitzer Prize winning *Anthracite Fields* for the All-Stars and guest choir, the record release of Wolfe’s acclaimed *Steel Hammer*, featuring Trio Mediaeval, plus a brand new staged collaboration with SITI Company and director Ann Bogart; *Field Recordings*, a major new multi-media project and CD/DVD package featuring over 20 commissioned works by Tyondai Braxton, Mira Calix, Anna Clyne, Bryce Dessner, Florent Ghys, Jónni Jóhannsson, Christian Marclay, Steve Reich, Todd Reynolds, and more; the world premiere, performances, and recording of Steve Reich’s 2x5 including a sold-out performance at Carnegie Hall; the world première of *The Lord in the Clouds*, a new collaboration featuring Chinese superstar singer Gong Linna, and much more. With a massive repertoire of works written specifically for the group’s distinctive instrumentation and style of performance, the All-Stars have become a genre in their own right. The All-Stars record on Cantaloupe Music and have released past recordings on Sony, Universal and Nonesuch.

GET FREE MUSIC NOW! Email music@bangonacan.org for an immediate link to streams and free downloads of music from Bang on a Can. For more info please visit: www.bangonacan.org

**Bang on a Can Staff:** Artistic Directors: Michael Gordon, David Lang, Julia Wolfe; Executive Director: Kenny Savelson; Development Director: Tim Thomas; Project Manager: Philippa Thompson; Production Manager: Yisroel Lazaros; Found Sound Nation Co-Directors: Chris Marianetti, Jeremy Thal, Elena Moon Park; Accounts Manager: Brian Petuch; Online Store Manager: Adam Cuthbert

**Bang on a Can Board of Directors:** Daniel Baldini, President, Jeffrey Bishop, Michael Gordon, Lynette Jaffe, Alan Kifferstein, Michael Kushner, David Lang, Raulee Marcus, Elizabeth Murrell, Robert A. Skirnick, Jane Stewart, Sandra Tait, Julia Wolfe, Adam Wolfensohn.


Photo courtesy of Bang on a Can
SITI Company

SITI Company was built on the bedrock of ensemble. We believe that through the practice of collaboration, a group of artists working together over time can have a significant impact upon both contemporary theater and the world at large.

Through our performances, educational programs, and collaborations with other artists and thinkers, SITI Company will continue to challenge the status quo, train to achieve artistic excellence in every aspect of our work, and offer new ways of seeing and of being as both artists and as global citizens.

SITI Company is committed to providing a gymnasium-for-the-soul where the interaction of art, artists, audiences and ideas inspire the possibility for change, optimism and hope.

Founded in 1992 by Anne Bogart, Tadashi Suzuki, and a group of likeminded artists, SITI Company began as an agreement to redefine and revitalize contemporary theater in the United States through an emphasis on international cultural exchange, training and collaboration. Originally envisioned as a summer institute in Saratoga Springs, New York, SITI expanded to encompass a year-round season inclusive of touring, the creation of new work and running a Conservatory program for 9 months of the year to cultivate the next generation of independent theater artists. Based in New York City, SITI continues to operate its international training program during its summer season in Saratoga. The Company is known nationally and internationally as a top-level artistic collective that generates groundbreaking theater.

In addition to Co-Artistic Directors Anne Bogart, Leon Ingulsrud and Ellen Lauren, SITI Company is comprised of eight actors, four designers and a playwright. The company represents a change in thinking about the relationships between artists and institutions. Offering performances from our varied repertoire, and workshops in the unique theater training we champion, SITI Company is dedicated to establishing long lasting relationships with theater presenters and their communities around the world.


SITI Company Board of Directors: Anne Bogart, Gigi Bait, Barbara Cummings (Vice-Chair), Rena Chelouche Fogel, Christopher L. Healy (Treasurer), Kim Ima (Secretary), Leon Ingulsrud, Alexandra Kennedy-Scott, Kevin Kuhlke, Ellen Lauren, Thomas Mallon, Kelly Maurer, Charles L. Mee, Jr., Ruth Nightengale (Chair), Annie Pell, and William Wagner


SITI Company Staff: Michelle Preston, Executive Director; Megan Hanley, Education Manager; Alexandra Lalonde, Development & Communications Manager; Vanessa Sparling, General Manager; Jeremy Pickard, Space Intern


SITI COMPANY ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To become a contributor to the SITI Company, call the office at 212-868-0860 x102 or visit www.siti.org.