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Music: ETHAN BRAUN

With:

Jessica Gadani,
Justin F. Kennedy,
Jasmine Orpilla &
Roger Sala Reyner

Stage & Light:
Shahryar Nashat

Costume:
Adam Linder

Libretto
in co-operation
with Sarah
Lehrer-Graiwer

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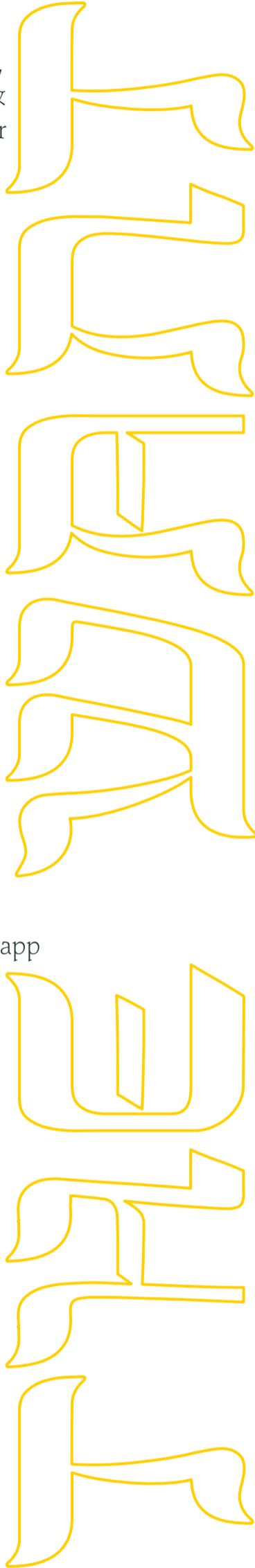
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LIBRETTO

ACT ONE

HOMO ECONOMICUS

BOOTS ARE MADE FOR WALKING

OFFEROR: If you are out walking, at this hour and in this place—you are looking for something. Whether it's a need or a want, I can help. The only thing between us is currency, and that conversion is unavoidable. I will be here long after you've gone—so if you name it, I can hand it over... this something is like a weight to unload.

Approaching you like dusk creeps-up on a lamp, I lean in with respect, perhaps even affection. These hands are open, palms are up and I keep some space between us, so not to constrict the chance you will buy. And I know you will take something...

Because the thought of errantry is also the thought of what is relative, the thing relayed as well as the thing related.

Poetics of Relation, Edouard Glissant

We need not give it a name yet and finding out will take its own while: an undefined 'want' is a melancholic thing; anxiously hidden like a wrapped gift.

I can wait.

Just know, whatever you may ask for, I can answer to.

You will get the trade-off, the tipping of scale, a shot in the dark, that I am willing to risk.

»If ever we choose to avoid one another, we still walk the same line, tread the same ground.«

FACE-OFF

OFFEREE: I'm not out walking in this particular place at this particular hour. I'm out walking and only walking. From here to there and nothing in between. I had not planned on any such encounters and this want you talk of is not on my list of needs.

Perhaps, had the darkness been thicker, obscuring telltale signs, I might believe your claims.

The appeal to consensus and a unity of interests is invariably discredited in Koltès's work, dismissed as the very form of paranoia and repression, the refusal of l'étranger.

Bernard-Marie Koltès and Relations of Interest, Peter Hallward

But the confusion of this place and this hour, in fact leaves no memory of ever wanting anything.

So how dark would it have to be to make you appear less dark than the darkness itself?

»Wandering, one might become lost, but in errantry one knows at every moment where they are in relation to another.«

OFFEROR: Whether you agree or not, the line you were walking did bear off and so apparently I became that opaque something in between.

...I don't do A to Bs, am fine to wait, long moments for thinking, almost without moving at all, like someone who's not on their way somewhere but banks on the world coming to them.

You veered and you can insist you didn't but I will double-down:

a flutter of instinct compromised the straight line you thought you were on.

OFFEREE: You're wishing for my deviations, to get an upperhand, so much that you imagine them into existence.

Opacities must be preserved; an appetite for opportune obscurity in translation must be created.

Poetics Of Relation, Edouard Glissant

...whilst you calmly pack your poetics into craters of opacity. I might puff but I won't inhale.

I resent this eye-to-eye that you wager, but in laziness have not bothered to earn. It's the same eye that could raise a cloud in a glass of clear water.

Say, I was just drifting along and say, you were who you claim to be—I'm held up, inconvenienced and want returns on my time and yours is a shadowy kind of offer I will not sign for.

ROPE PULL

OFFEROR: In your shoes, there is no degree of dark that would make me appear less dark than the darkness itself.

The strength of the European Enlightenment is based on two unconditional quests: the search for scientific knowledge, understood as the only true form of knowing and the sole source of rationality, and the effort to vanquish "darkness"—that is, to banish everything unscientific or irrational.

Stay Baroque, Bonaventura De Sousa Santos

OFFEREE: Show yourself: are you a crook kicking a can in the gutter or are you my legit counterpart?

OFFEROR: For the time being, give up this old obsession with discovering what lies at the bottom of natures.

OFFEREE: I was merely walking, yet you maintain this farce, this veiled offering, because my gaze scoped the surroundings. What makes you so suspicious of these eyes?

OFFEROR: The limits of a well-phrased classicism, perpetuating a lukewarm humanism, both colourless and reassuring.

Throw a brick through a Philip Glass ceiling. "Let's put on our classics and have a little dance shall we?"—The Streets
Ethan Braun

ELECTRIC LIFE

OFFEREE: Without marked prices—is it worth it? Clear terms of exchange—let me work it. Business in regular hours—I put my thing down. Under electric light—flip it, sell it and reverse it.

Girl, girl, get that cash / If it's 9 to 5 or shakin' your ass / Ain't no shame, ladies do your thing / Just make sure you ahead of the game.

Yet this is not anything other than the usual rehearsals of frightened animals in foreign places.

Work It, Missy 'Misdemeanour' Elliot

...Excuse me for believing in phone calls, paid invoices and prompt deliveries.

OFFEROR: What would you rather I talk about then, because I know you want to discuss—get a sense for it, figure it out, make it stable, to understand and analyse it and then feel like you know all about it?

And out of those countless individual moments that never solidified into objects, when individuals or little groups had musical experiences that had nothing to do with musical objects or any social purpose, music and music-like behaviour have gained the reputation of being able to touch one's most intimate subjectivity.... This is valuable in an entirely different sense, not because it is exchangeable and/or available for future realization, but rather because it has some weight on a scale of values that are only partially economic and object-like—values such as health, love, and justice.

Audio Poverty, Diederich Diederichsen

You'll then think of me as some kind of guttersnipe, but what if I was an original Israelite? Will I live in your ghetto forever after? Whilst you manufacture

the ghetto blaster. Now I'm feeling a little bolder, no need to carry your music on my shoulders.

GREEN ROOM

OFFEREE: Why do you still hide your goods? Show them all to me, licit, illicit, whatever, named at least. Open to evaluation, then I know

how to say no: I can dazzle you with all the ways I have of saying no, of making you see just how many ways there are of saying no... No, thank you very much, but no; no, not today; not now; no, not ever; not like this; not with you; no, not here; no, I don't want to; no, how dare you; no, no, no, what I want is for you to...

OFFEROR: The glory of being the one who provides is that you never endure a refusal.

Thus I have never learned to say no, and I don't in the least wish to learn how to say no. Yes, of course, yes. Every kind of way to say yes, those I know well: yes wait a moment, yes wait a while, yes wait here with me for all eternity; yes I do have it, yes I will have it, yes I did have it and I'll have it again soon; no I never had it but yes I will get it for you.

LENNY B AT THE CHARGE MAHAL

I confess, I acknowledge, I recognize, I confirm and sign or countersign. I do: a sentence as extraordinary as a "yes." The economy and brevity of the response: as simple and bare as possible, the utterance implies not only an "I," but an "I" who does what it says while saying it—the "I" who has heard and the "I" who utters "yes".

APEX → FINGER LICKIN'

I see what you want collecting like saliva at the corner of your mouth... I will wait for it to run down your chin.

What is important now is to recover our senses. We must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more.

Against Interpretation, Susan Sonntag

END OF ACT ONE

FLOWER FIELDS

ACT TWO

EXHUMING

»A want so hot it vaporises.«

JEWY XIV

OFFEREE: You're a strange sort of rogue, a thief who doesn't bother pilfering anything—most eccentric.

Or perhaps, you're just cunning... twisting the situation, making me wish a thing from you.

Where is your risk? Your uncertainty? You smell suspicion and fear all over me.

OFFEROR: You think I had grand designs for you.

...I only put my hand on your arm out of curiosity, to know whether flesh that has the appearance of a plucked chicken feels warm like a live chicken or cold like a dead one—and now I know.

That's why I handed you my jacket.

Mother told me you have to think a long while before giving away your shoes, and never, in any circumstances, is it proper to give away your trousers.

OFFEREE: A threat that switches on a dime to a caress—that's how you keep me in the game.

But it was you who served-up first, so I was expecting from you both the taste of wanting and the intention to close the deal—I take no issue following cues.

OFFEROR: Then work with the want from someone else: be a link in their chain.

I mean what could be a better antidote to the selfie bleakness of the present than an auto-erasure that turns me into an empathy vessel channeling the yearning of someone I love. Mothering will necessarily hyperbolize such aspirational chain-linking. All about transference and circumvention: indirection's where I is at.

Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer

SCAFFOLD OF BABEL

OFFEREE: We speak across untranslatable planes, under different forces of gravity. I'm not born of the same woman as you but I also had formative lessons. They told me: your thumb belongs to you, so you must not suck it, you should protect what is yours.

OFFEROR: Nothing can ever be untranslatable—nor, moreover,

The anus is so well hidden that it forms the subsoil of the individual, his "fundamental" core.

Guy Hocquenghem, Quoted In *Sex (In Public)* By Henrik Olesen

purely translatable. Translation, as one would say "in the works" or "in transit"... traveling... travail-ing... transferential and transformational travail: in labour, in operation, from the italian as operare... Found us now translated as opera.

OFFEREE: No, an impossible translation.

OFFEROR: Before mystery one must allow oneself to open, to unveil oneself completely so that the mystery is forced to unveil itself in turn.

Whether I'm dog and you're human; or you're human and I'm something else altogether—push beyond that liberal accord of difference, find an irreducible singularity.

You need not take any particular action in any particular way at any particular hour. I'm offering you blind acceptance of friendship.

VIRGIN SUICIDES

How can the voluptuous emotion be reduced to a commodified object and, in our times of fanatical industrialization, become an economic factor? To understand this we must consider for a moment what it is we mean by the terms "sexuality" and "eroticism." Then perhaps the forms of the voluptuous emotion will reveal their simultaneously secret and tragic connection to the anthropomorphic phenomenon of economy and exchange.

[The Living Currency](#), Pierre Klossowski

OFFEREE: Feelings are only traded like with like, this is a fake transaction with fake money, a poor man's transaction faking the real thing.

With nothing to offer, you lay your feelings out, like a bad business gives you a discount at the end.

»So there is only one authentic communication: the exchange of bodies through the value code of symbols.«

IN THE MIDDLE SOMEWHAT S&M

OFFEROR: One who gives and does not receive, takes possession, of one who receives to subsist and so cannot give back.

OFFEREE: There were desires, they fell all around us and have been kicked to the ground...

I don't want to be good or wicked, to strike or be struck, to seduce or be seduced. Let us both be zeros, both perfectly round, impenetrable, side by side, rolling.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

OFFEROR: My dear: first there was an earth, then there were instruments, the objects and then at last mere symbols representing these objects, and finally the relations between beings and their desires of these symbols.

...An insistence on these desires being needs. It's too late now, this has to be settled.

OFFEREE: You want compensation for empty space between us?

OFFEROR: Every promise to sell infers the promise to buy, and there's a forfeit to pay: a pound of flesh, a sum of money.

OFFEREE: Now you're accomplishing your designs for me.

OFFEROR: If you run, I will chase; if you take the wrath of my fist, I'll be by your side, in your unconscious and beyond.

OFFEREE: I only fear unfamiliar rules.

OFFEROR: Even the one language we might share, that of money, whilst representing and guaranteeing that which exists, is only a signifier for what does not exist—for fantasy.

OFFEREE: Well then what weapon?

"Then must the Jew be merciful." Six brief words name the Jew and mercy in the same breath... It deserves to rise above this text as an immense allegory; it perhaps recapitulates the entire history of forgiveness, the entire history between the Jew and the Christian, the entire history of economics (merces, market, merchandise, merci, mercenary, wage reward, literal or sublime) as a history of translation.

[What Is a Relevant Translation,](#)
Jacques Derrida

END OF ACT TWO

Production: Adam Linder.
Co-production: HAU Hebbel
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