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Kamala Sankaram

John J. Cali School of Music

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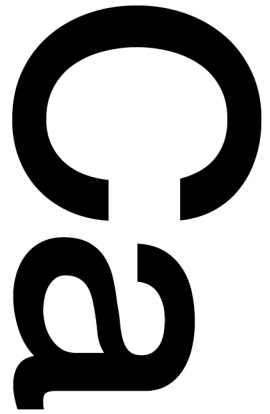
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Crescent

**Kamala Sankaram
and Bombay Rickey**

Featuring students from
the John J. Cali School of Music



CALI SCHOOL OF MUSIC



CALI
IMMERSIVE
RESIDENCY
PROGRAM

Leshowitz Recital Hall
Thursday, February 17th, 2022
7:30 pm

Program

Crescent (2022) - *world premiere*

Kamala Sankaram
b. 1978

Kamala Sankaram, voice and electronics

Ololyga (2017)

Sankaram

Yejin Lee, soprano and electronics

The Far Shore (2014)

Sankaram

*Emely Sepúlveda, soprano
William Hobbs, piano*

Eight Phases of Luna (2019)

Sankaram

*GaDa Lambert, soprano
Courtney San Martin, soprano
Taylor Amato, soprano
Jason Zacher, bass-baritone
Seungchan Hong, baritone
William Hobbs, piano*

Intermission

Bombay Rickey

Pieces to be announced from the stage

*Kamala Sankaram, voice and accordion
Drew Fleming, guitar and vocals
Jeff Hudgins, alto saxophone and vocals
Nick Cuduahy, bass
Brian Alder, percussion*

Biographies

Kamala Sankaram

Praised as “strikingly original” (NY Times), and a “new voice from whom we will surely be hearing more” (LA Times), Kamala Sankaram has received commissions from Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Beth Morrison Projects, the PROTOTYPE Festival, Opera on Tap, Opera Memphis, and the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, among others. She is the recipient of a Jonathan Larson Award from the American Theater Wing, and has received grants from Opera America, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Kevin Spacey Foundation, and the MAP Fund. Residencies and fellowships include the MacDowell Colony, the Watermill Center, the Civilians, HERE Arts Center, CAP21, Con Edison/Exploring the Metropolis, the Hermitage, and American Lyric Theater. As a resident artist at HERE Arts Center, Kamala created MIRANDA, which was the winner of the New York Innovative Theatre Award for Outstanding Production of a Musical. THUMBPRINT, her second opera (written in collaboration with librettist Susan Yankowitz), premiered in the 2014 PROTOTYPE Festival, and was featured on NPR’s Weekend Edition, Agence French Presse, and over 25 media outlets around the world. THUMBPRINT has since received productions at LA Opera and Opera Ithaca. She is currently working with Opera on Tap and librettist Jerre Dye on THE PARKSVILLE MURDERS, the first opera written for virtual reality. Episode 1 is now available on SamsungVR.

As a performer, Kamala Sankaram has been hailed as “an impassioned soprano with blazing high notes” (Wall Street Journal). She has performed and premiered pieces with Beth Morrison Projects, Anthony Braxton, and the Wooster Group, among others, and is the leader of Bombay Rickey, an operatic Bollywood surf ensemble whose debut was named Best Eclectic Album by the Independent Music Awards Vox Pop. Bombay Rickey’s opera-cabaret on the life of Yma Sumac premiered in the 2016 PROTOTYPE Festival and was most recently presented in London at Tête-à-Tête Opera’s Cubitt Sessions. Bombay Rickey has been selected for the 2017/18 season’s Mid-Atlantic Arts touring roster, and will release their sophomore album in the spring of 2018. Dr. Sankaram holds a PhD from the New School and is currently a member of the composition faculty at SUNY Purchase.

Bombay Rickey

Praised as “a true treat for the adventurous ear” (*TimeOut NY*), Bombay Rickey is a five-piece band with a unique sound evocative of 1960s movie soundscapes. The group plays both covers and original music that borrow equally from the worlds of surf rock, cumbia, spaghetti-Western, and Bollywood, balanced out with soaring operatic vocals.

Since its inception in 2012, Bombay Rickey has become a fixture at Brooklyn mainstay Barbés, as well as having played live on WFMU, opened up for Cambodian psychedelic band Dengue Fever, and having been featured in an ad for Citibank. Bombay Rickey’s debut album, *Cinefonia*, was named best debut of 2014 by New York Music Daily and received the Vox Pop Award for Best Eclectic Album from the International Music Awards. Most recently, Bombay Rickey was invited to create an opera cabaret based on the life of Yma Sumac for the prestigious PROTOTYPE Festival in New York City. The show ran for seven sold-out performances and was hailed as a “rocking musical show” by the Wall Street Journal.

The band features Kamala Sankaram: vocals, accordion; Drew Fleming: guitar, vocals; and Jeff Hudgins: alto saxophone, vocals; with Nick Cuduahy: bass; and Brian Adler: percussion. All longtime NY musicians, the five members of Bombay Rickey have done previous work with John Zorn, Anthony Braxton, Chicha Libre, and Alarm Will Sound, to name a few.

The Far Shore

This life waxes and wanes.
It does not last long.
The leaf that falls does not return to the branch.
But behold, Behold the Ocean of Rebirth.
Behold its irresistible tide.
Pilot of my soul, Pilot of my soul, swiftly guide my ship.
Pilot of my soul.
Swiftly guide my ship.
Guide my ship to the far shore, the far shore.

Text by Meera Bai (trans. anonymous)

Eight Phases of Luna

Phase 1

I'll call him Luna because his eyes are lit with a blue flame.
Like the moon. Luna.
Yes, his eyes. *His*.
News flash: He's a puppy.
He doesn't care what gender his name is.
Luna's breed is elusive. He's a proud mutt.
Or, better, "breed-inclusive."
Part spaniel, beagle, chihuahua, corgi, Possibly appenzeller and of course, dachsy
Maybe not so much bred as assembled by epoxy.
This little furry being. This little life. This Luna. This Luna.

Phase 2

Luna sees a leaf. Creeps up to it. Leaps high.
Pounces, bounces, Nips it. Flips it into the air.
Creeps, Leaps, Pounces, bounces, Nips it, flips it.
Again. And again. Oh and again.
A dash of fur,
A flash of green,
In the morning light.
That leaf is the most miraculous,
Most wondrous,
Most astounding thing he's ever seen.
He's right.

Phase 3

The dog run. A new guy here.

Who is that?

Cute.

Hot.

Probably crazy, One of the dog people.

His eyes are kind

Nice ass. Wow... it's been awhile.

Men are such dogs

With my luck, (s)he's a stalker, commitment challenged, Neo-Nazi, a drunk, another needy child,

(Wow, that was bitter.)

Oh wait... (s)he smiled.

Hi

Hi This is Finley. I'm dog sitting for my sister.

Sister, not girlfriend. This is Luna.

Luna? But...

Don't.

Phase 4

Luna was not pleased when I moved in. Not at all.

He sulked. Scowled. Once even growled.

I was the bed-robber, The treat-stealer. The affection poacher.

No matter what I did his resentment would not flag.

I was undeserving of even a cursory wag.

But tonight

Suddenly, Without reason

I found a tortured tennis ball

Dropped at my feet,

With an expectant look.

I reached down. Tossed it down the hall...

And that's all it took.

To paraphrase: Dogs work in mysterious ways.

Phase 5

He eats

I fret.

I doubt.

He races.

The rent.

My job.

He barks.

My weight.

My hair.

He naps.

How could he say that?

What did she mean?

He plays.

Bills.
Taxes.
He chases.
The news.
My hair.
He sniffs.
I missed my train.
I missed my chances.
He sleeps.
The future.
Why? Why?
He gets. He gives. He lives.

Phase 6

Loony-tunes. Is ten years old today. Ten years.
He lies in his chair, Blithely unaware.
To him, each day is good,
No diff'rent from the others,
Each day is true,
Each day has its adventures.
Each day is new.
You only need to Yield, Adjust, Lead when you need to,
Let others lead when you don't. And trust.

We're watching Animal Planet on TV. I think he thinks it's a comedy.

Phase 7

The world was large
But had its bounds when you bounded around making your evening
rounds.
Hello to the mailbox,
Hello to the tree on the corner.
Hello to the deli
Hello to the woman smoking
Outside the bar on the street,
Who always greeted you with a treat.
Hello to the Pizza Paradise where years ago you found an abandoned
slice.
Hello to the dog run,
The dog run!
Then back again from your evening roam and home.
Now... Now the world is small.
And closing in, your joints stiffen, your breathing is thin. Not much of a
roam.
Hello to the mailbox,
And home.
With dreams of the tree the deli the treat. The slice. And the dog run,
the dog run.

Phase 8

They ask nothing of death.
No religion makes them beg forgiveness.
No egotism makes them seek a legacy
When it's time they know.
And ask for a simple letting go.
Meeting, moving in
Marriage and now a simple letting go.
No sorrow. No grief.
I was here.
I played.
I barked.
I chased the most miraculous thing, A leaf.
a simple letting go.
a simple letting go.

Text by Mark Campbell