Where Future Unfolds
and
Demon Fruit Blues

running
time is ninety minutes with
intermission.

Eyes
Wide

Lights
Low

at MCA
Stage

Summer/Fall
2018

Where Future Unfolds and
Demon Fruit Blues running
time is ninety minutes with
intermission.
FROM THE CURATOR

I am struck by how distinct Damon Locks’s and Tamar-kali’s works are, while having so much in common: both artists compose music in order to rework familiar narratives, their own musical inheritances, and history itself. Over the past year I got to hear about Tamar-kali’s relationship to her Gullah roots on the Sea Islands of South Carolina, Damon’s latest obscure vinyl discovery (recordings by writers Lorraine Hansberry and Claude McKay), and a time when Tamar-kali crashed on Damon’s couch in the early 2000s during filming for the documentary Afro-Punk. Beneath our conversations is their mutual intention: that performance can be a moving political gesture.

Thank you for joining us at the end of Tamar-kali’s weeklong New Works Initiative residency and as Damon expands his vision with Chicago’s own Black Monument Ensemble. As we embrace these two in-development projects, you are witnessing them at a vital, pivotal moment.

Tara Aisha Willis,
Associate Curator of Performance
MCA Stage's series of artist-centered talks, workshops, and open studios engages the public with the artists in intimate settings and provides a closer look at the creative process.

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POST-SHOW TALK
Sat, Aug 18

The audience is invited to join Damon Locks and Tamar-kali in conversation directly after the performance, moderated by Associate Curator of Performance Tara Aisha Willis.
ABOUT DEMON FRUIT BLUES

Tamar-kali’s Demon Fruit Blues explores the origins of misogyny and the “curse of womanhood” as outlined in Genesis 3:16:

To the woman he said: I will intensify your toil in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.

This collection of works speaks to how the perception of the female body reverberates throughout Western history and represents the cultural and ideological concepts that drive Tamar-kali as an artist. Inspired by the majesty of female African deities, “goddess”-themed art, and feminist theory, these works reflect the artist’s personal journey to self-discovery and acceptance. Tamar-kali’s lyrical and compositional approach connects the dots between modern-day rock, gospel, blues, and original African rhythms and reframes the influence of classical music in an eclectic contemporary context. The resulting experience challenges the trend of hidden influences in popular American media that severs the ties between history and culture.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DAMON LOCKS: WHERE FUTURE UNFOLDS

DAMON LOCKS is a Chicago-based visual artist, educator, vocalist, musician, and DJ. He received his BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Since 2014 he has been teaching art at Stateville Correctional Center through the Prison + Neighborhood Art Project. He is a recipient of the Helen Coburn Meier & Tim Meier Foundation Achievement Award in the Arts and the 2016 MAKER Grant. Last year he operated as an Artist Mentor in the Chicago Artist Coalition program FIELD/WORK, and more recently he became a Soros Justice Media Fellow. He is currently inaugurating the new Public-Engaged Residency at the Hyde Park Art Center and works as an artist in residence as a part of the MCA’s SPACE Program, introducing civically engaged art into the curriculum at the Sarah E. Goode STEM Academy.

JOSEPH A. KERN (VOCALS) is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, with a BS in Neuroscience. Kern has served in Zambia as a Rural Health Extensionist with the United States Peace Corps and as a mentor for Chicago teens through the Chicago Youth Programs and Summer Service Partnership. He has also stayed connected to the music he grew up with through the Chicago Children’s Choir. Kern is currently in his second year at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine.

PHILLIP ARMSTRONG (VOCALS) graduated from Millikin University with a BA in Music and BS in Communication. Armstrong performed in the Chicago Children’s Choir and Lookingglass Theatre’s production of Site Rem, debuting the role of God Brahma/ King Janaka. He made several appearances as a lead vocalist for the Steve Harvey Gala and Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s inaugurations, and has been featured on Fox News, WGN News, and ABC News. On the weekends Armstrong performs in the Becca Kaufman Orchestra at Chicago’s greatest venues: The Drake, London House, Navy Pier, and The Peninsula of Chicago, among others. He was recently featured as an alumnus on the Chicago Children’s Choir vinyl record We All Live Here.

ALLIE BRADFORD (VOCALS) is a Chicago Children’s Choir alumna and performing vocalist. She has sung alongside a plethora of world-renowned musicians and toured domestically and internationally with various groups including the American Music Award–winning band New Kids On The Block. She has recorded for Grammy Award–winning artist Chance the Rapper and is a background vocalist for Billboard’s new favorite singer-songwriter, Jamila Woods.

TRAMAINÉ S. PARKER (VOCALS) began singing at age four at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Chicago. She later joined the Chicago Children’s Choir, performing at several venues including Ravinia in Highland Park, IL; Carnegie Hall, Riverside Church, NY; and the Harris Theater for Music and Dance. She has performed with a number of ensembles including the John Work Chorale, Vocality, and Pitchmafia. While studying at Fisk University, Tramaine was a member of the Fisk Children’s Choir, performing at several venues including Ravinia in Highland Park, IL; Carnegie Hall, Riverside Church, NY; and the Harris Theater for Music and Dance. She has performed with a number of ensembles including the John Work Chorale, Vocality, and Pitchmafia. While studying at Fisk University, Tramaine was a member of the Fisk University Choir and Grammy-nominated Fisk Jubilee Singers, and she received an MA in Clinical Professional Psychology from Roosevelt University. In addition to performing as a soloist in the Chicagoland area, Tramaine works as an investigator for the Illinois Department of Children Family & Services.

DANA HALL (DRUMS) is a jazz drummer, percussionist, composer, bandleader, and ethnomusicologist. After spending the first few years of his life in Brooklyn, NY, he relocated with his family to his mother’s hometown of Philadelphia. There, Hall was exposed to jazz and soul music through the recordings of his mother Diane, his uncle Earl Harris, and his large extended family. His
family's interest in creative music and their "open door" policy toward the finest resident Philadelphia jazz musicians of the modern era created the perfect environment to spark Hall's curiosity, passion, and ultimately his career in music.

ARIF SMITH (PERCUSSION) is a multidisciplinary artist and educator. His performance- and video-based work centers on diasporic citizenship and African-rooted performance practices, exploring notions of blackness, copresence, and marronage. Currently, Smith is a Program Manager at Old Town School of Folk Music and an Artist-in-Residence with Arts + Culture at the University of Chicago. He is also a member of Bomba con Buya and Iré Elese Abure.

BEN LAMAR GAY (TRUMPET AND BELLS) is a composer, cornetist, vocalist, and producer who moves components of sound, color, and space through folkloric filters to produce electro-acoustic collages. Gay's unification of various styles is always in service of the musical narrative. His true technique is giving life to an idea while transforming the thought and theory of the term "Americana."

TAMAR-KALI: DEMON FRUIT BLUES

TAMAR-KALI Born and bred in Brooklyn, Tamar-kali is a second-generation musician, composer, and singer-songwriter. The aggressive, melodic rock of her five-piece outfit at once enchants and delivers a swift kick to the gut. The work she composes and arranges for Psychocam Chamber Ensemble, her string sextet and voice project, marries the classical music of her Catholic upbringing with post-punk sensibilities. Her incendiary performances and contributions to the 2003 documentary film Afro-Punk's soundtrack introduced a generation to her unique story and undeniable talent. Her debut as a film score composer came in 2017 with Dee Rees's Mudbound and continued in 2018 with Joshua Marsten's Come Sunday. Her vocals were featured in Dee Rees's Periah and HBO's biopic Bessie. Her eclectic sound and versatility have allowed her to perform with a diverse list of artists from Paramore, Vernon Reid, and Roger Waters to Vijay Iyer, Meshell Ndegeocello, and The Roots.

CHARLOTTE BRATHWAITE (DIRECTOR) is known for her unique approach to staging classical and unconventional texts, video, film, dance, visual art, multimedia, site-specific installation, performance art, plays, and music events. Her work has been seen in the Americas, Europe, the Caribbean, Asia and Africa and ranges in subject matter from the historical past to the distant future, illuminating issues of race, sex, power, and the complexities of the human condition. No one is safe from the "up-and-coming women in theatre to watch" by Playbill. Brathwaite has received the Prelude Festival Franky Award, the Princess Grace Award, the Julian Mitchell Art Prize (Yale), a Rockefeller Residency, and the National Performing Network Creation Fund. She received her MFA at Yale School of Drama and her BA in Physical Theater at the Amsterdam School for the Arts. She has been a Visiting Professor at Amherst College and a Visiting Artist at Williams and has created paintings, drawings, performance art, and sculptural installations in New York City and abroad in various galleries, public spaces, and in residencies in India, Scotland, England, and El Salvador. Her public performance work has taken place in Zuccotti Park and Central Park with the NYC Parks Department. Her live video work was displayed at Summer Stage in Central Park during a 2016 Tamar-Kali performance. Other NYC performances have taken place at the Joyce Theater, Littlefield

TIFFANY SMITH (VISUAL IMAGERY) is an interdisciplinary artist from the Caribbean diaspora who works with photography, video, installation, and design to focus on identity, representation, cultural ambiguity, and displacement. Smith received a BFA in Photography from the Savannah College of Art and Design and an MFA in Photo/Video from the School of Visual Arts, NY. Her work has been included in recent exhibitions at MassArt, Boston; St. John's University, Queens, NY; The Bronx Museum of the Arts; and the National Gallery of Jamaica and exhibited at PhotoNOLA, New Orleans; and Spring Break Art Show, NY. She has presented public art installations in Newark Penn Station through The Gateway Project and Marcus Garvey Park during Flux Art Fair, Harlem, and recent solo exhibitions at Space Create, Newburgh, NY, and The Wassaic Project, and a forthcoming solo exhibition at Matheratt College of Art, Boston.

SARAH OLSON (VISUAL IMAGERY) has created paintings, drawings, performances, and sculptural installations in New York City and abroad in various galleries, public spaces, and in residencies in India, Scotland, England, and El Salvador. Her public performance work has taken place in Zuccotti Park and Central Park with the NYC Parks Department. Her live video work was displayed at Summer Stage in Central Park during a 2016 Tamar-Kali performance. Other NYC performances have taken place at the Joyce Theater, Littlefield
Join us for dinner or drinks before or after the theater at Marisol, named one of the “hottest restaurants in Chicago” by Zagat and one of Vogue’s “Six Chicago Restaurants You Should Know About Now.” Call 312-799-3599 to make reservations.

DATE NIGHT

Marisol Escobar. Photo: Herman Hiller.

SEASON CALENDAR

Summer/Fall 2018

Aug 18  Tamar-kali and Damon Locks
          Demon Fruit Blues and
          Where Future Unfolds

Aug 24–25  Chicago Dancemakers
           Forum
           SHareOUT!

Aug 31–Sep 1  Chicago Dancemakers
             Forum
             SHareOUT!

Oct 3–4, 6–7  Dorothée Munyaneza /
              Kadidi
              Unwanted

Nov 2–3  Ishmael Houston-Jones,
         Ralph Lemon,
         and Bebe Miller
         Relations

Dec 5–9  Claudia Rankine,
         Will Rawls, and John
         Lucas
         What Remains
SUPPORT FOR MCA STAGE

Lead support for the 2018–19 season of MCA Stage is provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman.

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*Enact Chair
As of August 2018

ABOUT ENACT

MCA Stage is supported by Enact, a group of MCA donors dedicated to supporting the Museum’s renowned Stage programs.

Join today for opportunities to meet artists and gain behind-the-scenes access alongside MCA curators—all while providing vital support.

Circle Donor membership is required to join Enact. Enact donations begin at $1,000 annually. For more information on benefits or to join, contact us at enact@mcachicago.org or 312-397-4044.

The MCA is a proud member of the Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

ABOUT MCA STAGE

As an internationally renowned institution devoted to contemporary culture, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago presents the most thought-provoking visual art and performing arts of our time. MCA Stage is a vibrant series presenting theater, dance, and music by leading artists from the United States and around the world in the MCA’s three-hundred seat Edlis Neeson Theater.

MCA Stage’s groundbreaking performances are an integral part of the MCA’s artist-activated, audience-engaged programming. Along with the museum’s exhibitions and educational initiatives, they encourage a broad and diverse community to experience and discuss the work and ideas of living artists.

PARKING
Validate your ticket at coat check for $12 parking in the MCA garage (220 E Chicago Ave) and the Bernardin garage (747 North Wabash). The $12 parking is limited to six hours on the date of performance.

LOST AND FOUND
To inquire about a lost item, call the museum at 312-280-2660. Unclaimed articles are held for thirty days.

SEATING
Please switch off all noise-making devices while you are in the theater.

Patrons are seated at the management’s discretion. Food and open beverage containers are not allowed in the seating area.

REPRODUCTION
Unauthorized recording and reproduction of a performance are prohibited.

GENERAL INFORMATION
312-280-2660

BOX OFFICE
312-397-4010

VOLUNTEER FOR PERFORMANCES
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