

Waking the Witch

Workshop Performances

December 9 and 10, 2022, 7 pm
WNO Studios, Washington, DC

WITCHFINDER	Min Sang Kim, <i>countertenor</i>
INQUISITIN, the accused witch	Audience
ANIMAL FAMILIARS	
A BLACK MOUSE	Meghan Shanley Alger, <i>flute</i>
A GRAY RABBIT	Preston Hawes, <i>violin</i>
A WHITE KITTEN	Sam Ross, <i>clarinet</i>
ENSEMBLE	Emory Hensley, <i>percussion</i> Elizabeth G. Hill, <i>piano</i> Erin Murphy Snedecor, <i>cello</i>
COMPOSER/LIBRETTIST	Ashi Day
STAGE DIRECTOR	Lee Cromwell
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT	Kareem A. Mack
COPYIST	Erin Murphy Snedecor

- I. Prologue
 - II. In the midst of the disasters
 - III. Accusation 1: The Tavernkeeper's Son
 - IV. Accusation 2: The Neighbor's Wife
 - V. Accusation 3: The Magistrate's Estate
 - VI. The Charges
 - VII. Think On Your Soul
 - VIII. Proof
 - IX. The Contract
 - X. I Rise
 - XI. The Sabbath
 - XII. In the midst of the disasters
 - XIII. Epilogue
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Please fill out our post-show survey [here](#).

Composer's Note

In the US, it's hard to think of witches and witch hunts without thinking of Salem, where 25 people died in an explosive panic that broke out in 1692. However, Salem was a late-stage event in a period of witch panics that had been happening for centuries, mostly in Europe. Between approximately 1500-1700, thousands and thousands of people were accused, tried, and executed for the imagined and impossible crime of witchcraft. By the time our American outbreak happened, much of the world had begun to move on.

While individual witch trials would happen in medieval times, it wasn't until the early modern period that individual accusations could lead to panics that would ensnare multiple—sometimes dozens, sometimes hundreds—of people. The exact causes of witch panics can be debated forever, but clear influences include Heinrich Kramer's 1486 theological treatise, *Malleus Maleficarum*, which acted almost like a manual for witch hunters (and used questionable writing and research tactics by both today's standards and those of its time). That, and the extensive use of torture.

Notably, witch hunters in East Anglia during the English Civil War, including the infamous self-proclaimed "Witchfinder General" Matthew Hopkins, could not legally use torture, but sleep deprivation was not considered torture. "Waking the Witch" or "Walking the Witch" was a process where an accused person was kept awake for days, not allowed to sit or rest, until the Witchfinder's questions were satisfactorily answered. This was often preceded by being searched for a "witches' mark"—any unusual mark on the body—a humiliating experience that would require the accused to be stripped, possibly shaved, and often pricked with needles (the marks were supposedly unable to feel pain). With sleep deprivation, the accused would begin to experience all kinds of side effects, such as hallucinations, heightened suggestibility, paranoia, disassociation, and "microsleeps" (quick involuntary losses of time). It is perhaps no wonder Hopkins and other historical witch finders like his partner John Stearne, Kramer, King James (yes that one), and Johann Georg Fuchs von Dornheim (the "Hexenbischof") got the wild confessions they did that now comprise much of our mythology about witches.

While Matthew Hopkins was traveling up and down East Anglia finding out witches in various towns (for, of course, a fee), one of his brothers was emigrating to Massachusetts as a Puritan colonist. The people hunting witches in England, Scotland, Germany, and elsewhere were both the ideological and literal ancestors of the American colonists. Our country's founding is laced with many things, including fragments of ideologies that saw the devil everywhere and justified nearly any means

to root out him and his followers. Over the course of our history, moral panics have continued to repeat: Salem, McCarthyism, and the Satanic Panic, for example. Today, the term Critical Race Theory is being bandied about alongside all kinds of imagined and terrible wrongdoings; greater acceptance and visibility of the LGBTQIA+ community has been met with accusations of subversion and infiltration and a frighteningly misapplied conflation with sexual predation.

Early modern witch hunters (not necessarily those initiating accusations, but those who carried out persecution) were most often members of the most secure social classes, and accused witches were predominantly the most vulnerable members of the society. Witch hunters believed they were fighting a secret cabal of Satan-worshippers that wished to take down their nations, religions, and very ways of life in order to promote the worst perversions they could imagine. Today, we have conspiracy theorists making almost identical claims—literal claims of secret, devil-worshipping cabals trying to infiltrate government, subvert society, and convert the good people of our nation—and these claims place a lot of blame on the members of our society who have historically faced the most disadvantages. People in major positions of authority have shown both explicit and implied support for these conspiracy theories and the black-and-white, high-stakes, us-vs.-them thinking behind them. Like in the era of the witch hunts, religion and faith can be used as tools of or justifications for fear mongering, exclusion, dehumanization, radicalization, and even violence, instead of as tools of empathy, humility, and inclusion. Like in the era of the witch hunts, the most vulnerable people may find themselves again and again in situations where people around them, including people in power, are unable or unwilling to believe them. What do we do?



An image from The Discovery of Witches (1647) by Matthew Hopkins, self-appointed Witchfinder General, depicting himself, accused witches, and their animal familiars.

Team

Ashi Day (Composer/Librettist)

Ashi's vocally driven works explore the intersections between music and theater; strategic humor and absurdity; the interplay between the experiences of performers, audiences, and the canon; and animal songs. Her short mono-operas, *For Whom the Dog Tolls* and *The Green Child*, intentionally provide sopranos with the rare opportunity to be playful and victorious for most of the plot, while subtly exploring who is allowed to move freely through the world. Her operas, art songs, and choral works have been commissioned or performed by Artifice, Juventas New Music Ensemble, Calliope's Call, Whistling Hens, N.E.O. Voice Festival, American University, Washington State University, College of the Holy Cross, Denison TUTTI, StageFree, District New Music Coalition, PERI trio, Cantate Chamber Singers, New Music on the Bayou, Hartford Opera Theater, The Fresh Squeezed Opera Company, and more. Ashi studied composition at Bucknell University under William Duckworth and Jackson Hill and at Westminster Choir College under Stefan Young, and earned an Ed.M. in Arts in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education as an Urban Scholars Fellow. She is a 2021 and 2023 DC Arts and Humanities Fellow and a 2022 winner of Opera America's Discovery Grants for Women Composers.



Min Sang Kim (Witchfinder)

Praised for his “unusually ethereal voice,” countertenor Dr. Min Sang Kim has performed the leading roles in many productions including Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Hawaii Performing Arts Festival; Ottone in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* with New York Lyric Opera; Endimione in *La Calisto*, Madame Haltière in *Cendrillon*, and Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Peabody Opera; Ixion in *La descente d'Orphée aux enfers* with Baltimore Theater Project; Tolomeo in *Giulio Cesare* with Pittsburgh Festival Opera; Secrecy, Mopsa in *The Fairy Queen* with HPAF; Nerone in *Agrippina* with Opera NEO; Ottone, Valetto in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Ascanio in *Ascanio in Alba*; and Giulio Cesare in *Giulio*



Cesare with Aspen Opera Center. In the concert stages, he has performed with Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Washington Bach Consort, Dolce Contento Ensemble, American Bach Soloists, Peabody-Hopkins Chorus, and Daegu Opera House among others. Dr. Kim is a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Capitol District, Annapolis Opera Competition, Camille Coloratura Awards, and Saltworks Opera Competition, and performed at Carnegie Hall as a Grand Prize winner of Concert Artists International Competition. Originally from South Korea, Dr. Kim studied at the Juilliard School's pre-college and received a Bachelor of Music degree at the New England Conservatory of Music. He received Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees at Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. He is currently serving as an Assistant Professor of Voice at the Austin Peay State University.

Balance Campaign (Orchestra/Instrumental Writing Advisors)

Balance Campaign is a Washington, D.C.-based contemporary classical ensemble dedicated to commissioning and performing new works by underrepresented women, LGBTQ+, and minority composers, as well as composers with connections to the DC area. Since their start in 2017, the group has been in residence at University of Maryland-Baltimore and the District New Music Coalition, where they curated full programs and workshop new works with students. In Fall 2019, Balance Campaign premiered their first commission from Fordham University professor, composer, and Maryland-native, Nathan Lincoln de Cusatis. They are currently working closely with composers Viet Cuong and Lexi Bryant-Tavani on new commissions to be premiered in 2023. balancecampaign.com



Preston Hawes (Violin/A Gray Rabbit)

Hailed by the European Academy of Arts and Sciences as an “electrifying and virtuosic” performer with “exquisite taste and rare talent”, Canadian violinist, Preston Hawes is the protégé of the late Dr. Virginia-Gene Rittenhouse. A finalist and laureate of the *Concours de Musique Du Canada*, winner of the Andrews International Music Competitions, the *Prix de Musique de Chambre à Fontainebleau*, and recipient of the JC Van Hulsteyn award and Peabody Career Grant, Preston has been heard as a soloist, recitalist, and clinician in over 35 countries in notable venues including Moscow’s House of Culture, The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Plovdiv Symphony Hall, Târgu Mureș Cultural



Palace, and Windsor Castle. His orchestral experience has led him to serve in leading positions under the batons of Sir Neville Marriner, Lorin Maazel, Phillippe Entremont, Anatoly Levin, Krzysztof Penderecki, Marin Alsop, and John Rutter. Hawes has been a featured performer at the Meadowmount School, the Conservatoire Américain, and the Taos Music Festival, among others. Growing in recognition as a conductor, Preston was invited in 2008 and 2009 to direct the opening concert of the Mozart International Choral Festival. As a foreign musical ambassador for the Hope of Bangkok charity, Hawes was recently granted a personal audience with HRH Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana of Thailand. Named an Associate Performer of the Royal Conservatory at the age of 16 and after studies at the Mannes College of Music, Hawes was designated a Stephen Hendel scholar at Yale University where he earned a Master of Music degree and the coveted Artist Diploma while studying with Ani Kavafian and Hyo Kang. With further study at the Mannes College of Music, his teachers include Gerald Fischbach, Sally Thomas, Victor Danchenko, Ida Kavafian, Gerard Poulet, Yfrah Neaman, David Kim, and Patricia McCarty, as well as chamber coaching and performances with Claude Frank, the Tokyo, Guarneri, Borromeo, Brentano, and Miami String Quartets. Having completed doctoral studies at the Peabody Conservatory of Music, Preston maintains a busy concert schedule and is Head of Strings and Director of Orchestral Studies at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, MD. Dr. Hawes is artistic director of the New England Symphonic Ensemble at Carnegie Hall.

Emory Hensley (Percussion)

Emory Hensley is a freelance performer and educator currently residing in College Park, Maryland. His love for chamber music has led him to work with a variety of composers and performers. He is a founding member of 10-can percussion, a contemporary percussion group committed to the performance of new and classic works for percussion. The group is currently in residence at Mars Hill University where they regularly offer masterclasses and performances. The group has been the ensemble in residence at The University of Maryland-Baltimore, as well as District New Music Coalition. As an educator, Emory offers a wide range of experiences. He is currently on faculty at the International School of Music in Bethesda, Maryland. Previously, he served as an elementary school teacher for Buncombe County Schools in North Carolina, teaching music students from kindergarten through fifth grade. With a strong background in marching percussion, Emory has been on the instructional staff for award winning ensembles in both the Drum Corps Associates and Winterguard



International competitive circuits. Emory received his Master of Music Degree in Percussion Performance from The University of Tennessee under Dr. Andrew Bliss and Keith Brown, and his Bachelors Degree in Music Education from Mars Hill University under Dr. Brian Tinkel. Emory is an artist with Innovative Percussion, and a member of the Percussive Arts Society.

Elizabeth G. Hill (Piano)

A recognized leader in contemporary music advocacy, pianist Elizabeth G. Hill has led and performed in the D.C. area's most prominent ensembles, and is also known for her work as a solo performer, educator, and lecturer. A highly-regarded artist, she has performed lecture-recitals and concerts in thirteen US states and in Europe, including for the Embassy Concert Series in Washington DC, the Center for



Jewish History in New York, and the Robert-Schumann-Haus in Zwickau, Germany. Elizabeth dedicates much of her career to bridging cultures through music, and realizes this vision through her leadership within two prominent chamber ensembles within the Washington, D.C. area. Her duo Meraki, which she co-founded in 2016, focuses on performing culturally essential music, and has performed in eight U.S. states and held residencies at three universities. Recently, the ensemble performed at New Music DC 2019, where it premiered Jerod Tate's "HelohaOkchamali" as an honoree of Chamber Music America's Classical Commissioning Program. Elizabeth helps promote the advancement of contemporary music in the DC area through serving as an administrator of the District New Music Coalition. Outside of these ventures, she continues to devote herself to the performance of contemporary works: recent premieres of new work include at D.C.'s Fringe Festival, New Music D.C., and with the Great Noise Ensemble at the West Fork New Music Festival in Fairmont, WV.

Sam Ross (Clarinet/A White Kitten)

Clarinet player Staff Sergeant Samuel Ross of Russellville, Ark., joined "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in September 2018. Staff Sgt. Ross began his musical training on piano at age 8, percussion at 11, and clarinet at 15. After graduating in 2003 from Russellville High School, he attended the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, where he earned a bachelor's degree in music performance in 2007. He continued his studies at the University of North Texas in Denton where he earned a master's degree in clarinet performance in 2009 and studied with John Scott. He has also studied with Yehuda Gilad of the University of Southern

California and Gregory Raden of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Ross served with the West Point Band at the United States Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., from 2012-18, where he also performed with the Academy Wind Quintet. In addition, he has performed with the Hudson Valley Philharmonic in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra in Little Rock; and the Victoria Symphony Orchestra and Lone Star Wind Orchestra, both in Texas. Staff Sgt. Ross also taught privately in the Lewisville, Texas, school district for four years. Staff Sgt. Ross performs with the Marine Band and Marine Chamber Orchestra at the White House, in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, and across the country during the band's annual concert tour.



Meghan Shanley Alger (Flute/A Black Mouse)

Flutist Meghan Shanley Alger explores sounds on everything from harmonica and beer bottles to live electronics, knitting needles, and pencils. With an uncanny ability to create specific atmospheres, even the New York Times has praised Meghan for “singing into her flute to produce surreal and eerie timbres.” She ventures into the extreme with composers, pushing the boundaries of what is possible to create new worlds. Her performance credits include the Kennedy Center, AMP by Strathmore and Peabody Library of Baltimore, as well as Symphony Space and Carnegie Hall. Shanley Alger uses commissioning and programming to advance social change, designing concerts that prompt reflection and participation from audiences. Current projects include a debut album of living women composers highlighting the power of the archetypal feminine energy, with works by Pamela Z, Lunon, Socolofsky, and Nourbakhsh. Other projects include a participatory concert in which audiences honored lost loved ones. The ensemble she co-founded, Balance Campaign, consists of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, and percussion. A laboratory of sound and experimentation, Balance Campaign collaborates with composers to reimagine the concert experience and surprise listeners. The ensemble's debut recording features a work by Nathan Lincoln de Cusatis that highlights human evolution and our impact on the planet. Upcoming collaborations include works by Alexandra T Bryant and Ashi Day that focus on everything from moms and mice to the Salem Witch Trials. As a teaching artist, Meghan has presented workshops and residencies in Italy at the Alba Music Festival as well as University of Maryland and Catholic University. Committed to connecting



with students and audiences through shared experience and insight, Meghan regularly presents community engagement performances at schools, universities, and festivals.

Erin Murphy Snedecor (Cello)

Erin Snedecor is a cellist based in the DC area who specializes in contemporary chamber music, improvisation, songwriting, and collaborative art. Her interdisciplinary work has led her to create many of her own ensembles, where in addition to performing she acts as co-founder, composer, songwriter, arranger, manager, and beyond. Erin is a founding member, cellist, and music director of Balance Campaign, a



contemporary sextet dedicated to the commission and performance of new works. She also performs with earspace, a North Carolina-based contemporary ensemble that curates multi-sensory programs in unexpected venues. In addition to her classical projects, Erin is known for her ability to perform with a multitude of musicians and artists. In 2009, Erin joined forces with Annapolis indie rock band Pompeii Graffiti, appearing on 3 studio albums and performing in local and touring performances. She is also half of the indie/folk duo Black Rhinoceros, and a writer and performer of classical electronica quartet DoubleSpeak. Most recently, Erin released an album of original music under her solo moniker, Zoonanthellae, available on Off Latch Press.

Lee Cromwell (Stage Director)

Lee has led a varied career as a director, educator, producer and performer. Hailing from Harrington, Delaware, Lee is a magna cum laude graduate of Bucknell University, where he pursued dual degrees in Music & Theatre. Lee went on to earn advanced degrees in Conducting (MM, Westminster Choir College) and Directing (MFA, Indiana University Bloomington). At Indiana, he worked extensively in spoken drama, musical theatre, and opera, and on productions with the Bloomington Playwrights Project, Jewish Theatre of Bloomington, New Voices Opera, Indiana Repertory Theatre, and Indiana Festival Theatre. No stranger to new works, Lee has



directed and worked at a variety of theaters, including the National Theatre, Ford's Theatre, Rorschach Theatre, Young Playwright's Theatre, Imagination Stage, and the DC Queer Theatre Festival. From 2014 – 2017 he was the Associate Producer of the Source Festival and from 2017 - 2019 was the Festival Producer for Capital Fringe. Since the pandemic Lee has pivoted toward more work in virtual production. Currently, Lee is employed with Washington National Opera as the Rehearsal Planning Coordinator. leecromwell.com

Kareem Mack (Production Assistant)

Kareem Mack is a Maryland native with a diverse indulgence in the arts. Kareem's primary relationship with the arts has been with music.

Kareem attended the University of Connecticut, graduating with a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice Performance. During his UCONN residency, he performed multiple roles with the UCONN Opera theatre such as Mechanic and Ensemble in *HMS Pinafore*, Antonio



in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Pandolfe in *Cendrillon* (performed in English), Waiter in *She Loves Me*, and Mechanic in a UCONN commissioned/premiered opera, *Bessie and Ma*. After graduating, Kareem performed in Live Entertainment at Six Flags America while pursuing Associates Degrees in Dance Performance and English at Howard Community College. During this educational endeavor, Kareem produced and directed his own performance film titled *Kareem's Covid Café Cabaret* featuring talent from DC, Maryland, Virginia, and Connecticut. Kareem is currently a student at Temple University pursuing a Masters in Vocal Arts. Since being at Temple University, Kareem has performed as Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* as well as participated in private coachings with baritone Lester Lynch and met counsel Artistic Director Melissa Wegner. Kareem has a divine interest in interdisciplinary art with the goal of assimilating artistic and performance affectivity as an extension of expressivity and communication. Kareem also aspires to offer opportunities for the underrepresented artists of tomorrow. Kareem aims to introduce the world to his unlimited abilities and unique lens through his writings and other creations.

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ashi-day.com/wakingthewitch