

SHARE THIS SPACE

Stories and Observations

*A flexible, multi-media performance by
Lori Goldston, Kyle Hanson and
Mirah Yom Tov Zeitlyn,
with Britta Johnson,
and Spectratone International*

Commissioned by Portland Institute for Contemporary Art and
The Seattle International Children's Festival

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DESCRIPTION

Share This Place: Stories and Observations is a multi-media performance with original live music by Mirah Yom Tov Zeitlyn and Spectratone International, and animation by Britta Johnson.

Based in part on the writings of the influential French scientist/poet, J.Henri Fabre, the show explores the tender, dramatic, sordid, tragic and triumphant lives of insects. Written by Mirah and Black Cat Orchestra co-founders Lori Goldston and Kyle Hanson, the songs are at once personal and scientific.

Mirah has been recording emotional and ravishingly nuanced songs for Olympia, Washington's K Records since 1997. She has toured extensively throughout the U.S., Europe and Japan. For *Share This Place* she joins forces with long-time collaborators Lori Goldston, who is known for her work with Nirvana, David Byrne and many others, and Black Cat Orchestra co-founder Kyle Hanson. For this new work, they have commissioned the scratchy and radiant work of stop-motion animator Britta Johnson.

After leading the Black Cat Orchestra from 1991 – 2005, cellist Lori Goldston and accordionist Kyle Hanson formed Spectratone International with percussionist Jane Hall and Kane Mathis on oud (a Middle Eastern lute). Their sound is full, subtle and meticulously rendered, moving easily through a wide range of influences, including psychedelia, folk and early music.

Britta Johnson has created luminous stop-motion animated films for each of the songs. The insects, created out of corks, ashtrays, old balloons and other bits of domestic detritus, are seen singing, hatching, rolling balls of dung and otherwise fulfilling their destinies.

Share This Place draws inspiration and fact from many sources, including Karel Capek's surreal *The Insect Play*, where the epic and dramatic lives of the insects overpower the human bystander in their midst. Another long-gone collaborator is the late-nineteenth century entomologist, J. Henri Fabre, - "The Homer of Insects" according to Victor Hugo - who wrote about every encounter with his tiny neighbors so intimately as to give the distinct impression that he viewed his subjects equally alongside himself as weavers of the social fabric of provincial life.

The show was co-commissioned by the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art and The Seattle International Children's Festival. Produced by Phil Elverum and Steve Fisk, the song cycle is available on K Records as a CD and LP record with the same title.

PERFORMANCE OPTIONS

Share This Place is a flexible production available in several formats, depending on audience and technical parameters of the venue:

Film And Live Music Performance

For this performance a singer and four musicians take the stage while a video is projected onto a circular screen above them. It is designed for venues with specific technical capacities (see Technical Specifications, below), but can be modified for presentation in a wide variety of spaces, including cinemas, performance spaces and galleries. The length of the show is approximately 50 minutes.

Concert

The music from this performance can be presented in a concert context without the video, and will be augmented with other songs to build a full-length concert performance. The concert can be presented in a wide variety of spaces (concert hall, club, gallery) with no extraordinary technical requirements.

Film Screening

In this format, Britta Johnson's short films are screened individually or in a short program (10-12 minutes) with the original recorded score. Intended as part of a larger evening of shorts or as an opener for feature films, this short-form presentation is well-suited for film festivals, series and one-off events in cinemas of all sizes.

Residencies, Workshops And Classes

Classes and workshops for all ages are available in the following subjects:

- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- history of live music with film
- songwriting
- traditional instruments in non-traditional settings

PRESS

About a previous collaboration between Mirah, Lori Goldston and Kyle Hanson:

“To All We Stretch the Open Arm precedes Mirah's wonderful new album C'mon Miracle; together the albums show the singer/songwriter's increased interest in using music as social protest, as a way of arguing against injustice and for making the world a better place. That's a small part of C'mon Miracle, but here it's the focus, as Mirah leads the Black Cat Orchestra ...through 12 'protest songs', including two Mirah songs and 10 covers. The songs chosen cover a wide spectrum of time, place. What they have in common is they represent artists speaking their minds about society. Here their emotions and messages come across strongly due to Mirah's talent as a singer and song interpreter - she has a lovely singing voice but also an impeccable sense for what's important in the song, musically and content-wise. And the Black Cat Orchestra's relaxed but stirring performances support hers perfectly. Politically minded musicians don't have to be overly serious or aesthetically bland - the best are able to express such sentiments as honestly and gorgeously as they would if performing a song about love or sadness, and that's exactly what Mirah and the Black Cat Orchestra do here. A beautiful album.”

Dave Heaton, Erasing Clouds

About Mirah:

“Zeitlyn propels her magical, three-dimensional spaces with her clear beacon of a voice and instrumentation that slips from whisper-in-your-ear intimacy to rushing, tumbling aural avalanches.”

NY Press

About Lori Goldston:

“Goldston's music constituted a kind of physical enactment of listening. She began in silence — absorbing the moment ... and then her sound emerged, shifting and responding to what she took in.”

Matthew Stadler, Artforum

About the Black Cat Orchestra:

“A few things occurred to me after having written and made demos of a number of songs ... the songs appeared to be in a wide variety of styles that might best be interpreted by different groups of musicians...I'd heard the Black Cat Orchestra during a night out in Seattle, and they naturally came to mind when I imagined the way “They Are In Love” might sound. So I flew out there...and we recorded the tune pretty much live.”

David Byrne

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

There are 5 musicians onstage, arranged in a semicircle facing the audience. From SL to SR they are vocalist, oud, cello, accordion, and percussionist. The vocalist stands, all others sit on armless chairs.

The instruments are fairly quiet and require a moderate amount of amplification. The following is a list of acceptable microphones. Where a particular microphone is not available, we will work with the tech crew to find a suitable alternative.

vocal	Neumann KMS 105 is preferred. Shure Beta 58 is acceptable
acoustic oud	A small condenser microphone: Neumann KM 184. AKG 451 is also acceptable
cello	DPA 4021. Also acceptable: Shure KSM 32 or AT4050
accordion	a pair of matched condensers, first choice is AKG. Shure or Earthworks is also acceptable
percussion	Sennheiser 421 or SM57, and a small condenser like Shure SM81

The percussionist sings harmony on one song - a vocal mic is needed.

Other stage needs:

- 2 monitors with 2 separate mixes
- 4 armless chairs with flat seats

Video projection:

Spectratone International will provide all equipment necessary for the projection of the film. We will need a suitable place to set up a video projector, free from disturbances and with a clear shot to the stage. We will set up a video control station near the stage, and place a video monitor on the stage for the performers.

Company will provide:

A circular screen 12 feet in diameter, centered in the place where the usual projection surface hangs. Preferably, the screen will have a circular mask at the booth and a dark backdrop behind the screen to eliminate projections outside of the circular screen. (See 'Screen Rigging Instructions' below)

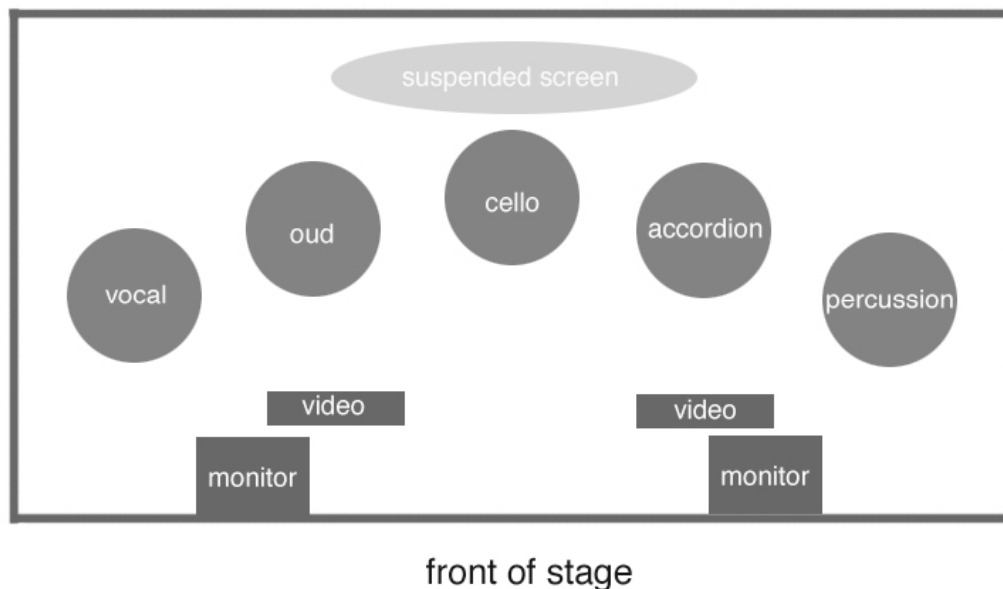
TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS, continued

Stage lighting and effects:

- Gentle spot on vocalist
- General spot on vocalist and band
- Where available, two or three colors for each for different moods

For most of the show, visual attention is focused on the films. There is usually almost enough ambient light reflected from the screen to gently illuminate the performers on stage. We like to have some lighting on the band at the beginning and end of the show, and a spot on the vocalist during those moments between songs when she speaks with the audience.

Stage Plot



Dressing Room

A clean, well-lighted dressing room with clothes rack and mirrors, situated near the stage entrance is required. An iron and a clothes steamer are needed.

Green room/hospitality

Water, tea and coffee, and a variety of healthy foods, included some vegetarian options, are needed. The company travels with a small child and nanny.

Accomodations

The company needs one double room with a trundle bed for a child, and four single rooms.

Screen Rigging Instructions:

The company will need three assistants and an area at least 20' square to assemble the screen. Everyone must wash their hands prior to handling the screen, and a clean dropcloth (new plastic is fine), 16' square, is needed to protect the screen from dirt and damage while it is being assembled. Once assembled, the 'screen sock,' a decorative fabric addition provided by the company, will be placed on the circumference of the screen and held in place with drawcords. It takes roughly an hour to assemble the screen and attach the sock.

The screen has two rigging points when assembled, one at 10 o'clock, the other at 2 o'clock. The rigging points are loops of black cord, each with a shackle. Two pulleys and two good lengths of lightweight black cord are needed. The pulleys should be placed at least 6 feet above where the top of the screen will hang, centered on the stage with a distance of 10 to 12 feet between them. Each length of cord travels up from the floor, through a pulley, and ends at a rigging point on the screen. The screen is then stationary for the duration of the performance.

The screen weighs less than eight pounds. The main concern is to minimize the amount of warp as it hangs. If the rigging is symmetrical and the screen can be suspended directly below the pulleys, the screen will provide a flat surface for the projection.

If the schedule allows, it is best to rig the screen and focus the projector before the stage is set and microphones placed. The lighting can then be focused to stay off the screen, and there will be no on-stage obstacles while rigging the screen.