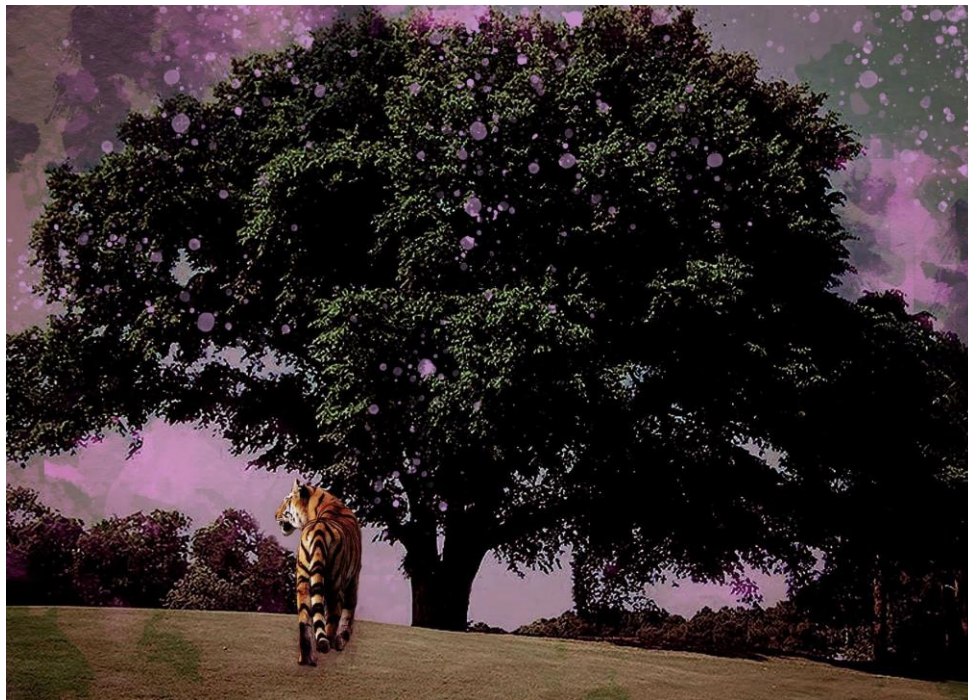


## The Crossing and the Annenberg Center Present *The Month of Moderns 2021*

Outdoors and Spatially Distanced in New Hope, West Philadelphia, and  
Germantown Using Echoes Amplification Kits



June 3-6: *The Forest* at Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve in New Hope

June 11-13: The World Premiere of Matana Roberts' "*we got time.*", a Work Honoring the Life of Breonna Taylor, with Ars Nova Workshop at The Woodlands in West Philadelphia

June 18-19: The World Premieres of Wang Lu's *At which point* and Ayanna Woods' *Shift* and the US Premiere of David Lang's *the sense of senses* at Awbury Arboretum in Germantown

"[A] gift for lending social activism poetic form." – *The New York Times*

[www.crossingchoir.org](http://www.crossingchoir.org)

Philadelphia, PA (April 28, 2021) — Grammy® Award-winning choir **The Crossing**, led by **Donald Nally**, announces the return of its annual summer festival of new music, ***The Month of Moderns 2021***, co-presented with the **Annenberg Center** from **June 3-19, 2021**. Each of the three outdoor programs, spread throughout

Philadelphia and neighboring New Hope, will be performed with singers and audience spatially distanced using The Crossing's **Echoes Amplification Kits** designed by in-house sound designer **Paul Vazquez**, which allow an intimate aural experience while observing pandemic-time protocols. The Crossing will reprise their sold-out October 2020 run of ***The Forest*** at **Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve** in New Hope from **June 3-6, 2021**; perform the world premiere of **Matana Roberts'** "*we got time.*", a work honoring the life of Breonna Taylor, presented in collaboration with **Ars Nova Workshop** at **The Woodlands** in West Philadelphia from **June 11-13, 2021**; and present the world premieres of *At which point* by **Wang Lu** and an expanded version of **Ayanna Woods'** *Shift*, plus the U.S. premiere of David Lang's *the sense of senses*, at **Awbury Arboretum** in Germantown on **June 18 and 19, 2021**. Tickets will go on sale **May 11, 2021**.

*The Month of Moderns 2021* opens with **The Forest**, The Crossing's response to the limitations on group singing in the COVID-era, and runs for five performances: **Thursday, June 3, 2021 at 6:30pm**; **Friday, June 4, 2021 at 6:30pm**; **Saturday, June 5, 2021 at 4:00pm**; **Saturday, June 5, 2021 at 6:30pm**; and **Sunday, June 6, 2021 at 6:30pm**. In a time when choirs cannot sing and perform together in conventional ways, *The Forest* features the 24 singers of The Crossing performing along a 1/3 mile trail in Penn's Woods at **Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve** in New Hope, Pennsylvania, situated in the sounds and sights of the woods, while audience members walk, socially distanced, through the soundscape and landscape.

*The Forest* focuses on the symbiotic relationship between individual trees and the forest – a metaphor for the relationship between each singer and the ensemble. The libretto is formed from The Crossing singers' reflections on their isolation during COVID-time, overlaid with texts from Scott Russell Sanders' essay *Mind in the Forest*. The music was developed by conductor **Donald Nally** and assistant conductor **Kevin Vondrak**. Each Echoes kit allows singers to stand and safely sing 30 feet from each other and from the audience while listeners walk along a well-worn, mostly flat path of approximately 1/3 mile lined with speakers. Though the work captures the isolation of singers during the pandemic, the equipment allows the experience to be intimate and personal. The 20-minute experience attempts to reestablish those currently broken relationships between singers and audience members, and tells The Crossing's story – a story of a planet in crisis, its people and its forests in peril, and yet, in that curiously human way, a story of hope and a way forward. [Watch the world premiere of The Forest and read the libretto.](#)

The Crossing and the Annenberg Center partner with **Ars Nova Workshop** for **Month of Moderns 2: "we got time."**, featuring the world premiere of **Matana Roberts'** work honoring the life of Breonna Taylor. "*we got time.*" is set in West Philadelphia's **The Woodlands** on **Friday, June 11, 2021 at 6:30pm**; **Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 3:30pm**; **Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 6:30pm**; and **Sunday, June 13, 2021 at 3:00pm**. Composer, sound artist, and jazz saxophonist **Matana Roberts** has created a collage of sound that reflects on the world today, positioning the loss of Breonna Taylor at the center of that world, and asks questions about the meaning of familiar words present in historic documents – the United States' Declaration of Independence and the Preamble and First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution – the 19th-century hymn *Pass Over to The Rest*, event data related to Taylor's death, and a roll call of the names of Black women lost in similar ways. Roberts writes of this sound quilt as a communal practice, "a scrap alone is of no use, but a scrap bounded together by others of its diverse kind will move beyond anything that it ever thought it could be." The title stems from Taylor's trial, when grand jurors were told they wouldn't be able to watch all of the body camera footage due to time restraints, and one juror shot back, loudly, "we got time." "*we got time.*" is experienced as a socially distanced 1/3 mile walk through the trees and markers of The Woodlands historic cemetery with timed entry for groups of people.

The festival ends with **Month of Moderns 3: At which point** at **Awbury Arboretum** in Germantown on **Friday, June 18, 2021 at 6:30pm** and **Saturday, June 19, 2021 at 6:30pm**. The program features the world premiere of *At which point* by **Wang Lu** composed specifically for socially distant, amplified performance, using as inspiration the emotional valleys and peaks of 2019 Pulitzer Prize-winner **Forrest Gander's** raw, brutally honest poetry. A new, expanded version of **Ayanna Woods'** *Shift* also receives its world premiere, a work The Crossing premiered digitally with film on November 2, 2020, the day before the general election. Woods has written the words for this bold new piece in which she contemplates the reimagining of our monuments, building through layers to its climactic arrival, "bursting through the cracks in the story you tell, America." [Watch the Shift film, part of The Crossing's 2020 Election Films series.](#) The program closes with the US premiere of **David Lang's** *the sense of senses*, a co-commission of The Crossing, The Company of Music (Vienna), and

the Fisher Center at Bard College. The work distills all five senses mentioned in the *Song of Songs*, rearranged to collate each sense. They are then presented from far to near – sight, sound, smell, feeling, taste. The result is a growing intensity as the senses come closer, an apt reminder of the power of sense as we emerge from an era in which so much of that very-human connection has been absent.

Committed to recording its commissions, The Crossing has produced many critically acclaimed albums which originated at its annual festival, *The Month of Moderns*, including GRAMMY® Award-nominated releases *The Arc in the Sky* and *Voyages*. The Crossing is dedicated to working with creative teams to make and record new, substantial works for choir that explore and expand ways of writing for choir, singing in choir, and listening to music for choir, often addressing social, environmental, and political issues.

### **Performance Information**

#### ***The Month of Moderns 2021***

**Co-Presented by The Crossing and the Annenberg Center**

#### ***Month of Moderns 1: The Forest***

**Thursday, June 3, 2021 at 6:30pm**

**Friday, June 4, 2021 at 6:30pm**

**Saturday, June 5, 2021 at 4:00pm**

**Saturday, June 5, 2021 at 6:30pm**

**Sunday, June 6, 2021 at 6:30pm**

**Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve | 1635 River Rd. | New Hope, PA**

**Tickets: \$35. On sale May 11**

**Link: <http://www.crossingchoir.org/events/2021/mom1>**

#### **Program:**

Donald Nally and Kevin Vondrak – *The Forest* (2020)

**Note:** *The Forest* experience is available by reservation only, entering at timed intervals. Timed entry requires audience members to arrive 10 minutes prior to the entry time. Upon arrival, staff will check-in, and the audience will queue for staggered entry into the piece. In order to maintain safe distancing, late arrivals cannot be guaranteed entry. Groups walk along a prescribed trail, in a loop that does not require them to double back across other audience members or singers. Comfortable shoes appropriate to hiking or long walks are encouraged. The performance occurs along a 1/3 mile well-worn path in the woods. An additional 1/2 mile of walking along a paved road is required to return to parking.

#### ***Month of Moderns 2: "we got time."* Presented with Ars Nova Workshop**

**Friday, June 11, 2021 at 6:30pm**

**Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 3:30pm**

**Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 6:30pm**

**Sunday, June 13, 2021 at 3:00pm**

**The Woodlands | 4000 Woodland Ave. | Philadelphia, PA**

**Tickets: \$35 with special pricing for West Philadelphia residents. On sale May 11**

**Link: <http://www.crossingchoir.org/events/2021/mom2>**

#### **Program:**

Matana Roberts – *"we got time."* (2021) **[World Premiere]**

**Note:** The *"we got time."* experience is available by reservation only, entering at timed intervals. Timed entry requires audience members to arrive 10 minutes prior to the entry time. Upon arrival, staff will check-in, and the audience will queue for staggered entry into the piece. In order to maintain safe distancing, late arrivals cannot be guaranteed entry. Groups walk along a prescribed trail, in a loop that does not require them to double back across other audience members or singers. Comfortable shoes appropriate to hiking or long walks are encouraged. The performance occurs along a 1/3 mile path through the cemetery.

### ***Month of Moderns 3: At which point***

**Friday, June 18, 2021 at 6:30pm**

**Saturday, June 19, 2021 at 6:30pm**

**Awbury Arboretum | 1 Awbury Rd. | Philadelphia, PA**

**Tickets: \$35. On sale May 11**

**Link: <http://www.crossingchoir.org/events/2021/mom3>**

#### **Program:**

Wang Lu – *At which point* (2021) **[World Premiere]**

Ayanna Woods – *Shift* (Expanded Version 2021) **[World Premiere]**

David Lang – *the sense of senses* (2021) **[US Premiere]**

#### **About The Crossing**

**The Crossing** is a GRAMMY® Award-winning professional chamber choir conducted by Donald Nally and dedicated to new music. It is committed to working with creative teams to make and record new, substantial works for choir that explore and expand ways of writing for choir, singing in choir, and listening to music for choir. Many of its nearly 120 commissioned premieres address social, environmental, and political issues.

The Crossing collaborates with some of the world's most accomplished ensembles and artists, including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, American Composers Orchestra, Network for New Music, Lyric Fest, Piffaro, Beth Morrison Projects, Allora & Calzadilla, Bang on a Can, Klockriketeatern, and the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). Similarly, The Crossing often collaborates with some of world's most prestigious venues and presenters, such as the Park Avenue Armory, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Pennsylvania, National Sawdust, David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center, Disney Hall in Los Angeles, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Menil Collection in Houston, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Haarlem Choral Biennale in The Netherlands, The Finnish National Opera in Helsinki, The Kennedy Center in Washington, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space in New York, Winter Garden with WNYC, and Duke, Northwestern, Colgate, and Notre Dame Universities. The Crossing holds an annual residency at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center in Big Sky, Montana where they are working on an extensive, multi-year project with composer Michael Gordon and filmmaker Bill Morrison.

With a commitment to recording its commissions, The Crossing has issued 24 releases, receiving two GRAMMY® Awards for Best Choral Performance (2018, 2019), and six GRAMMY nominations. The Crossing, with Donald Nally, was the American Composers Forum's 2017 Champion of New Music. They were the recipients of the 2015 Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence, three ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, and the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award from Chorus America.

Recently, The Crossing has expanded its choral presentation to film, working with Four/Ten Media, in-house sound designer Paul Vazquez of Digital Mission Audio Services, visual artists Brett Snodgrass and Steven Bradshaw, and composers David Lang and Michael Gordon on live and animated versions of new and existing works. Lang's *protect yourself from infection* and *in nature* were specifically designed to be performed within the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Crossing is represented by Alliance Artist Management. All of its concerts are broadcast on WRTI, Philadelphia's Classical and Jazz public radio station. Learn more at [www.crossingchoir.org](http://www.crossingchoir.org).

#### **About the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts serves as a major cultural destination and crossroads connecting the University of Pennsylvania and the Greater Philadelphia region through innovative human expression in theatre, music, dance and film, serving an annual audience of over 80,000. The Annenberg Center also serves as a key resource for the arts at Penn, connecting master artists with Penn students in support of and as an enhancement to the arts curriculum. Student performing arts groups are also key users of the Annenberg Center's multiple performance and rehearsal spaces, while also staffing many operational roles throughout the academic year. In reflection of Penn's core values as a world-respected academic institution, the Annenberg Center emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence, diversity and rigor in its presentations;

prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences and groups it serves; manages outstanding performance, conference and meeting facilities; and stresses comprehensive event planning, production support and customer service. The Annenberg Center is a major provider of performing arts access for school children and actively engages a broad range of primary, secondary and post-secondary student audiences and inclusive constituencies from the campus, community and surrounding region. Visit [www.AnnenbergCenter.org](http://www.AnnenbergCenter.org).

### **About Ars Nova Workshop**

Winner of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming and *Philadelphia Magazine's* "Best of Philly" award, **Ars Nova Workshop (ANW)** is an internationally recognized jazz, experimental, and new classical music presenter. ANW explores the intersection of many forms of contemporary music and "has made Philadelphia a welcome stop for premier avant-garde jazz" (*Spin*).

Since its inception, ANW has programmed over 700 unique events throughout Philadelphia, often in partnership with leading cultural institutions, including Philadelphia Museum of Art, University of Pennsylvania, The Barnes Foundation, Institute of Contemporary Art, Settlement Music School, and the Painted Bride Art Center, and in unconventional spaces such as Bartram's Garden, the American Swedish Historical Museum, and Philadelphia's last active pre-World War I rowhouse synagogue, Shivtei Yeshuron Ezras Israel, to name just a few.

Performances have featured many of the most significant contributors to modern music over the last 50 years, including Cecil Taylor, Pauline Oliveros, Rhys Chatham, Henry Threadgill, The Art Ensemble of Chicago, Tony Conrad, Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, and MacArthur fellows Anthony Braxton, Steve Coleman, Ken Vandermark, George Lewis, and John Zorn. ANW's acclaimed "Composer Portrait" series has featured the remarkable depth of such artists as Vijay Iyer, Tim Berne, Tyshawn Sorey, Julius Hemphill, Steve Lehman, and Roscoe Mitchell, and featured performances from S.E.M. Ensemble, JACK Quartet, Daedalus Quartet, Ursula Oppens, Crucible Quartet, Jennifer Choi, Joseph Kubera, and many others. Recent performances have also featured adventurous composers who frequently work in the field of electronic music, such as Fennesz, Holly Herndon, Tyondai Braxton, Oneohtrix Point Never, and Ben Frost. Learn more at [www.arsnovaworkshop.org](http://www.arsnovaworkshop.org).

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\*Artwork: *Bowman's Tiger Tree Exits* by Steven Bradshaw and Nyahzul C. Blanco