



23/24 SEASON

Nightingale Vocal Ensemble

Photoplay

JANUARY 26, 2024

THE BRATTLE THEATRE | CAMBRIDGE, MA

The living moves in non human times (2021) Las que cruzan

Bogotá/Boston-based duo **Las que cruzan** presents a mystical, pulsating meditation on the cyclical nature of cosmic change.

Lichtspiel opus 1 (1921) Walter Ruttmann

The oldest surviving fully abstract film takes inspiration from artists like Kandinsky & Klee, at the beginnings of color animation.

Midnights (2022) Kathryn Brodie

An energetic solo dance performance by **Julia Keys**, dramatically illuminated by **Talia Shoshani**.

Venice (c. 1910) unknown

This partially damaged "actuality film" is accompanied by the madrigal "**Al lume delle stelle**" from Venetian composer **Claudio Monteverdi**. (singers: Erin Hogan, Rose Hegele, Ben Perry, Juan Suarez; continuo: Judah Coffman, Nathan Halbur)

Beneath (2022) Beth Walker

A meditation on growth, connection, & symbiosis, inspired by the entangled lives of fungi, with sound design by **Nicholas Faris**.

Trails (2021) Beth Walker

Walker says: "I started by building a contraption which allowed me to animate onto a rolling surface. The aim was to create a visual loop which grows in complexity over time." We will do similarly, inspired by **Bobby McFerrin's "circle singing"** method.

the Perfect Human (2022)

Lilan Yang

Inspired by **Jørgen Leth's *The Perfect Human* (1968)**, this work applies unsupervised machine learning & experimental filmmaking techniques to reexamine & question the contested notion of perfection in the eyes of artificial intelligence. (narrator: Judah Coffman; "human" soloist: Erin Hogan)

"Twas my one Glory" & "She died" (2024)

Shozab Raza

Visuals generated in real time, reacting to music by **Nathan Halbur & Angela Yam** from the 2023 choral opera *ADRIFT*, reinterpreting footage from the premiere. (soloists: Barbara Hill, Rose Hegele, Ben Perry, Angela Yam; projectionist: Baopu Wang)

CineML: Paris (2021)

Lilan Yang

A distorted assemblage of real-life Parisian shooting locations in **Richard Linklater's *Before Sunset* (2004)** immerses viewers in a captivating exploration of space & memory. Our musical response is a sampling of **Francis Poulenc's ultra-nostalgic song "Fleurs"** with improvised accompaniment. (soloist: Angela Yam)

MUSICIANS

Benjamin Kapp Perry *sponsored by Ellen & Earl Baucom*
Artistic Director

Judah Coffman *sponsored by Tim & Becky Coffman*
Project Leader

Nathan Halbur *sponsored by Heidi Halbur*
Project Leader

Nicholas Ford

Rose Hegele *sponsored by Dr. James Vernon & Geoffrey Blum*

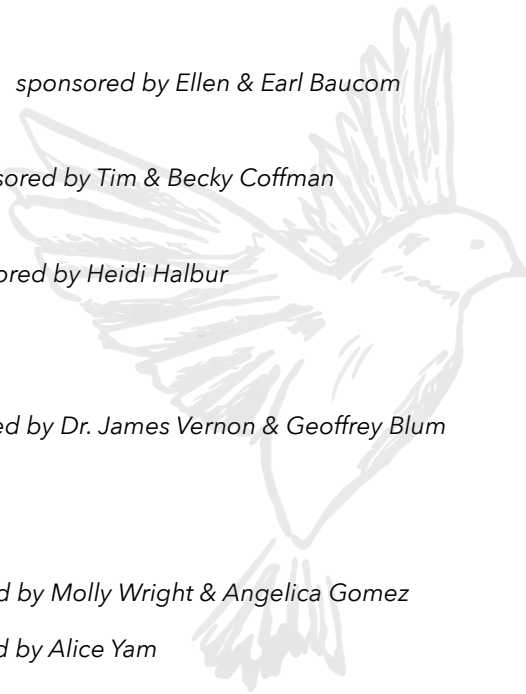
Barbara Allen Hill

Erin Shea Hogan

Juan Suarez *sponsored by Molly Wright & Angelica Gomez*

Angela Yam *sponsored by Alice Yam*

*To sponsor a singer on a future Nightingale project, email:
nightingalevocalensemble@gmail.com*



The living moves in non human times — Las que cruzan

A day,
A turn,
A cycle,
A spin.

The fire ball
has imperfections
as well.

Don't look at it!
Its great incandescence
will blind you!

Everyday that it
sighs, inhales, exhales;
its heat moves.

It dances and transforms
itself. Flies from one
place to another.

Moves everything around it,
wanders through the air and
through the ground.

Mischievous gases,
warm and cold,
fanning the world.

Another sphere watches
and breathes from afar.

Wondering about the
breeze that she longs.

Its cyclic spots, majestic
and shimmering.

Rotates and looks
how to work with the gale.

They cross and give birth
to the cold tide
that burns.

From its depths
it shakes.
Rises and falls.

It moves with huge strength,
reflecting and absorbing
everything in its path.

We don't know
everything that runs
through its salt.

In it, the
immovable moves.

Immovable in our time
and conception.

But changeable and
soft in its own measure.
Mutates and rotates.

Rolls, going back and forth,
stopping¹ when it
becomes something else.

Who moved it rises.

It forms by drops and
starts to flow.

Flowing in a different way,
it is volatile, veering.

It stays on the
atmosphere and it
swings in the air.

The sigh and the
exhalation takes it
somewhere else, it moves,
changes, precipitates.

When it dissipates²,
it reveals the mother again.

And so
it repeats.

That which moves
and lives.

**Lo vivo se mueve
en tiempos
no humanos**

Al lume delle stelle — Torquato Tasso (music by Monteverdi)

Al lume delle stelle

By the light of the stars

Tirsi, sotto un alloro,

Tirsi, under a laurel,

si dolea lagrimando in questi accenti:

laments in this tone:

«O celesti facelle,

“Oh, heavenly torches,

di lei ch’amo ed adoro

of whom I love and adore

rassomigliate voi gli occhi lucenti.

you remind me the bright eyes.

Luci care e serene,

Beloved and serene light

sento gli affanni, ohimè, sento le pene;

I feel my loss, alas, and my woe;

luci serene e liete,

serene and joyful lights,

sento le fiamme lor mentre splendete.»

I feel your flames as you flicker.”

Translation from CPDL

The Perfect Human — Jørgen Leth

[Music begins to play—a melancholy tune with string and wind instruments]

NARRATOR

Here is the human. Here is the human. Here is the perfect human. We will see the perfect human functioning. We will see the perfect human functioning. How does such a number function? What kind of thing is it? We will look into that. We will investigate that. Now we will see how the perfect human looks and what it can do. This is how an ear looks. And here is a pair of knees. And here, a foot. Another ear. Here is an eye. Look at this human's eye. Then, a mouth. A mouth and another mouth. Look, the perfect human, moving in a room. The perfect human can move in a room. The room is boundless and radiant with light. It is an empty room. Here are no boundaries. Here is nothing. Walking, running, jumping, falling. Look, now he falls. How does he fall? This is how he falls. Look, now she lies down. How does she lie down? This is how she lies down, like this.

[Music continues...] [Music stops]

Yes, there he is. Who is he? What can he do? What does he want? Why does he move like that? How does he move like that? Look at him. Look at him now. And now. Look at him all the time. Now the music is gone. No music anymore. The perfect human in a room with no boundaries and with nothing and a voice saying a few words. This voice, saying a few words. Look at him now. Look at him all the time.

[Music begins again, cheerier and faster now]

Now the perfect human undresses. The clothes come off. Bow tie, coat, shoes, trousers, boots, socks, dress, nylons, bra, pants. The clothes come off.

[Music continues...] [Music stops]

How is it to touch the perfect human? How is the skin? Is it smooth? Is it warm? Is it soft? Is it dry? Is it well cared for? How is the skin of the chin? How is it on the legs? The arms. The throat.

[Music begins again, slow and somber]

Here is the bed. Here is the bed. Fresh fragrant sheets. A soft spring mattress. A bed in this room. The room is no longer empty. There is a bed in the room. The bed in which the perfect human sleeps and makes love.

[Music continues...] [Music stops]

Listen to the human getting ready. Listen to the perfect human living. Listen to its sounds. What is this human thinking?

HUMAN

[Speaking in Danish:] Today, too, I experienced something. I hope to understand in a few days. Around my left hand was shining a ring of hazy white flames. I considered carefully the left side of my own dark coat. In the middle of my heart. There was a small white spot. I don't know what it's supposed to mean.

[Music begins again]

NARRATOR

Now there is a table too in the room and chairs and the human. The music and the voice. The perfect human is going to eat and to drink. We will see a meal. How does the perfect human eat? We will see its eyes and its mouth, eating. We will hear the sound knife and fork. We will see the fish being carved. And the wine being poured into the glasses. Dinner is served. Lovely boiled salmon with boiled potatoes and sauce, Hollandaise. With it, a bottle of Chablis.

[Music continues...]

What is he thinking? What is he thinking? Is the perfect human thinking of the room he is in? The food he eats? Happiness. Love. Death. What is the perfect human thinking? Look at him. What is he thinking?

[Music continues...] [Music stops]

HUMAN

[Singing in Danish:] Bum bum bum. Why is fortune so capricious? Why is joy so quickly done? Why did you leave me? Why are you gone? Why is fortune so capricious? Why is joy so quickly...? Why did you leave me? Why are you gone? Why is fortune so capricious? Why is joy so quickly done? Why are you gone? Why are you gone?

[Other distant voices speaking and yelling]

“Twas my one Glory” & “She died” — Emily Dickinson (music by Halbur & Yam)

'Twas my one Glory —
Let it be
Remembered
I was owned of Thee —

She died — this was the way she died.
And when her breath was done
Took up her simple wardrobe
And started for the sun.
Her little figure at the gate
The Angels must have spied,
Since I could never find her
Upon the mortal side.

“Fleurs” — Louise de Vilmorin (music by Poulenc)

Fleurs promises, fleurs tenues dans tes bras,

Promised flowers, flowers held in your arms,

Fleurs sorties des parenthèses d’un pas,

Flowers from a step’s parentheses,

Qui t’apportait ces fleurs l’hiver

Who brought you these flowers in winter

Saupoudrées du sable des mers?

Sprinkled with the sea’s sand?

Sable de tes baisers, fleurs des amours fanées

Sand of your kisses, flowers of faded loves

Les beaux yeux sont de cendre et dans la cheminée

Your lovely eyes are ashes and in the hearth

Un cœur enrubanné de plaintes

A moan-beribboned heart

Brûle avec ses images saintes.

Burns with its sacred images.

Translations by Richard Stokes, from *A French Song Companion* (Oxford, 2000)