

July 24, 2022

Maestro Yuval Sharon  
The Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director of Detroit Opera  
Founder and Co-Artistic Director of The Industry (Los Angeles)  
1526 Broadway St  
Detroit, MI 48226

Greetings Maestro Yuval Sharon,

We just read an excellent article about you, *Is the Future of American Opera Unfolding in Detroit?*, in the New York Times Magazine. After reading the article, my collaborators – Jon McKenzie and LG Williams – and I undertook to write to you immediately. Jon is a Professor of Performance Studies in the Department of Literatures at Cornell University and LG is a visual artist based in California.

During the past few years of this pandemic, we have been beset – as a devoted and experienced cultural producers, consumers, and educators – by the notion of culture's true fragility and vulnerability. Similarly, regular reports, speculations, images, and conversations have appeared across media platforms discussing the loss of culture, the growing absence of cultural opportunities, and, perhaps most alarmingly, the erasures of the uncreated culture.

We are writing directly to you with a Letter of Inquiry given your longstanding and remarkable history of imaginative artistic collaborations. We are soliciting the Detroit Opera to host the World's premiere performance of our next international opera project, *Possible*.

*Possible* is a one-night-only performance – of an opera of your choosing – with an unlimited administrative and production budget. The performance (and our production team) will generate all the usual event accouterments (marketing and production press releases, brochures, promotional credits etc.) and be planned, produced, and promoted in all the orthodox manners. However, *Possible* will never be performed – in Detroit, New York, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Vienna, Tokyo, or wherever it is announced.

This never-performed, international production also means that Detroit Opera's participation will not carry any financial expense or obligation whatsoever – other than approval.

All the performance promotion materials that advertise and announce *Possible* will clearly state NO DATE. In other words, *Possible* is, in effect, a highly anticipated presentation of a present that will never actually arrive.

We have reached out first and foremost to you because we believe this breakthrough caliber of artistic production aligns with your iconoclastic and progressive career trajectory. In this case, imagine rather than creating "stagings so wildly inventive they often dispensed with stages altogether," this particularly new project will proclaim a production "so wildly inventive it dispenses with the performance altogether."

From Baudelaire onwards, presenting or exploring the present in art has become and remains the core principle for modernist and contemporary art. Indeed, even today, the fascination with the present remains art's primary maxim and obsession even as theatrical "liveness," as Philip Auslander shows, depends on its transmediation both to appear and captivate.

With your generous assistance, we want to challenge our outdated fascination and reliance on the present. *Possible* will radically turn this essential modernist belief (that is, taking the present for granted) on its head by exposing the underlying hubris of the premise.

*Possible* proclaims a new, startling awareness that the present might not be present for much longer. In plain terms, *Possible* posits that our present should no longer be taken for granted and that the present should no longer be viewed as an inevitability. Instead, *Possible* sets the stage for the increasingly real possibility that the present, as we know it, is, in fact, a remarkably fragile and conditional contingency.

More can be said about *Possible* and our possible collaboration. Still, for this Letter of Interest, we would like for it to remain brief while hoping we have piqued your interest in having a brief, follow-up conversation with us shortly.

Sincerely,

Bryan Reynolds, Jon McKenzie, and LG Williams

(Apologies – we sent this to all the emails addresses we found because we were not sure which was best.)

Cc:

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