
THE SHED **Press Release**

THE **BLOOMBERG** BUILDING
545 West 30th Street
New York, NY 10001

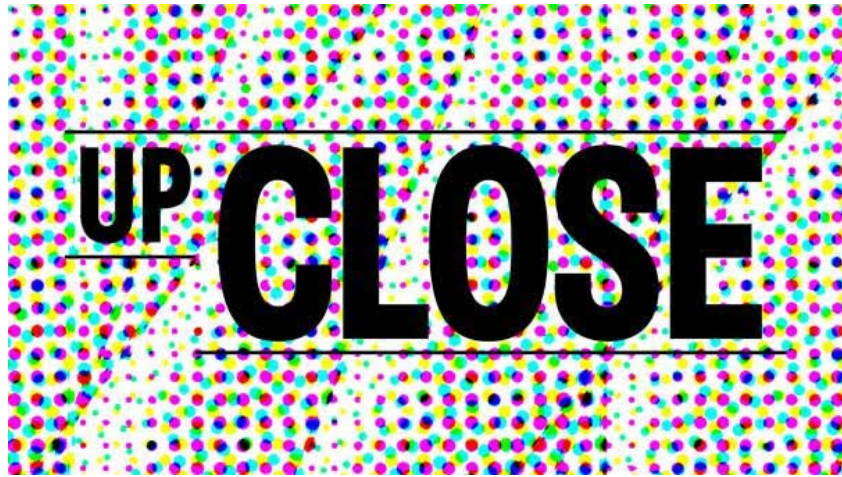
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***PASSING NOTES*, The Shed's New Commission by Artists Troy Anthony and Jerome Ellis, is a Virtual Live Music-Ritual for Public Mourning, Communion, and Healing**

Installment #3 of *UP CLOSE* Takes Place on Sunday, May 17 at 6 pm ET; Public Participation is Encouraged



NEW YORK, NY, May 17, 2020—In ***PASSING NOTES***, musicians **Troy Anthony** and **Jerome Ellis** create a virtual sanctuary on the Zoom digital platform in which the public is invited to participate in a collaborative ritual loosely based on the seven stages of grief. The two have composed original music and text, collaborating as if passing notes to each other at school. For one evening only, on **Sunday, May 17 at 6 pm ET**, the artists will open a space for participants to honor the healers in our communities, address the racialized and gendered injustices exposed by the coronavirus, mourn those who have died during the COVID-19 crisis, and celebrate new habits, practices, and relationships that have been born during this time.

PASSING NOTES is the third installment of ***UP CLOSE***, The Shed's digital commissioning program. The concept arose out of a conversation between the artists and The Shed's program team shortly after Ellis's grandfather passed on April 4, 2020. Like many families, Ellis's relatives have not been able to hold a funeral due to restrictions on gatherings, and Anthony and Ellis began to question how they could intentionally and creatively use Zoom to bring grieving loved ones together. Inspired by sources including Assata Shakur's poem "Affirmation" and the hymn "His Eye Is on the Sparrow," with original music and text composed for this event, the artists have imagined a new way to use online communication platforms as alternative spaces for collective mourning.

“The ritual we have created with *PASSING NOTES* explores the same elements of ritual that you’d find in a theater or concert hall or a sanctuary, but in a virtual space. It’s rooted in our superpower to connect with each other in deep and meaningful ways,” said Troy Anthony. “A part of healing is not only understanding how we are traumatized at this moment but also how we find hope. How does this crisis realign our own value practices?”

Jerome Ellis added: “We are making space for people to remember loved ones at a time when it’s not possible to come together. As a medicine, music can treat many forms of pain and trauma, not just what we are experiencing at this moment. It is my hope that the recorded artifacts that remain from *PASSING NOTES* are accessible to people six months, five years from now, in healing ways I could never imagine.”

PASSING NOTES is intended to be experienced as a live, participatory event, making space to share grief in real-time while separated from each other. Documentation of the ritual will be added to the web page so that future visitors might use these digital artifacts to build on the artists’ intention in the work.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN *PASSING NOTES*

For general audiences:

In advance of the ritual, the artists will welcome participants by email and provide detailed instructions to prepare for *PASSING NOTES*. To receive this email and participate, please reserve a free ticket at theshed.org/passingnotes. Zoom meeting information will be provided in a follow-up email on the day of the event.

For media:

Members of the press are welcome to attend *PASSING NOTES*. However, due to the personal and sensitive nature of the event, we ask that media RSVP directly to Sommer Hixson at sommer.hixson@theshed.org for information and instructions.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Anthony and Ellis’s collaboration began as they were rehearsing for other programs at The Shed and they devised their method for composing one of the songs in *PASSING NOTES*. In early 2020, Ellis composed the music for *Help*, a new play by Claudia Rankine, whose full run was postponed after The Shed’s temporary closure. Anthony will present his choral music theater piece *Antioch Mass* as part of *Open Call: Group 4* at The Shed. Here are their biographies:

JJJJJJJJJJJerome Ellis is a stuttering, Afro-Caribbean composer, performer, and writer. His current practice explores Blackness, music, and disabled speech as forces of refusal and healing. Ellis’s work has been heard at the Poetry Project, Sotheby’s, Soho Rep, and WKCR. He’s a 2019 MacDowell Colony Fellow, a writer-in-residence at Lincoln Center Theater, and a 2015 Fulbright Fellow. Ellis collaborates with James Harrison Monaco as James & Jerome. Their recent work explores themes of border crossing and translation through music-driven narratives. They have received commissions from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Ars Nova.

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Troy Anthony is a composer, actor, and director based in NYC practicing Black queer joy. He has presented work at Joe’s Pub, 54 Below, O’Neill Theater Center, National Alliance of Musical Theater Conference, Prospect Theater Company, and the Musical Theater Factory (MTF). Commissions include the Atlantic Theater Company, the Civilians, and The Shed. Troy has been seen in the Public Theater’s *Hercules*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*, as well as Prospect Theater Company’s *Tamar of the River*. He is the founding music director of the Public Theater’s Public Works Community Choir. He also focuses on the intersection between art and social justice serving as the director of legacy and internship programs at the DreamYard Project in the Bronx. Troy is a 2019 – 2020 MTF Maker.

ABOUT UP CLOSE

The Shed is committed to expanding the scope of how a cultural institution can serve its communities, a mission that is even more critical while distanced from one another.

To creatively engage artists and audiences in this moment of great uncertainty and upheaval, *Up Close* launched in April 2020 and continues every other Sunday with intimate performances, conversations, curated playlists, and other forms of original content that explore what it means to make art right now. The first two installments were performances in isolation by **The HawtPlates** and **Reggie ‘Regg Roc’ Gray and the D.R.E.A.M. Ring**.

Artists in future installments, many of whom The Shed showcased in its 2019 season, include DIS OBEY teaching artists **NOVA CYPRESS BLACK**, **Tasha Dougé**, and **Gabriel Ramirez** on May 31; **DJ April Hunt** and **Rashaad Newsome** with **Legendary Monster** and **Precious Ebony** on June 14; **Justin Allen**, **S*an D. Henry-Smith**, and **Yulan Grant** on June 28; **Kiyan Williams** on July 12; and **Tomás Saraceno** and **Tony Cokes** (dates to be announced).

Up Close is organized by Solana Chehtman, Director of Civic Programs, with Adeze Wilford and Alessandra Gómez, Curatorial Assistants, Justin Wong, Civic Programs Coordinator, and Lily Wan, Digital Content Producer. The Shed’s multidisciplinary commissioning program is developed by Artistic Director and CEO Alex Poots with the senior program team, including Emma Enderby, Chief Curator, Tamara McCaw, Chief Civic Program Officer, Madani Younis, Chief Executive Producer, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Senior Program Advisor.

ABOUT THE SHED

Located on Manhattan’s west side, The Shed commissions original works of art, across all disciplines, for all audiences. From hip hop to classical music, painting and sculpture to literature, film to theater and dance, The Shed brings together leading and emerging artists and thinkers from all disciplines under one roof. The building—a remarkable movable structure designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Lead Architect, and Rockwell Group, Collaborating Architect—physically transforms to support artists’ most ambitious ideas. Committed to nurturing artistic invention and bringing creative experiences to the broadest possible audiences, The Shed, led by Artistic Director and CEO Alex Poots, is a 21st-century space of and for New York City.