

# **STATE OF BEING**

*An Autobiographical Concert of Inner-Transformation*

**Creator and Vocalist - Emily Thorner**  
**Creative Director - Gwendolyn Kuhlmann**

**Composers:**

Emily Thorner (UK)  
Garrett Mendelow (USA)  
Kaley Lane Eaton (USA)  
Max Hundelshausen (DE)  
Laura Shipsey (UK)  
Luciano Berio (IT)

STATE OF BEING is a touring concert experience for one vocalist (and electronics) featuring commissions (with one exception!) specifically for her unique voice by a multi-national lineup of contemporary/living composers.

In addition to the concert, Ms. Thorner will engage with our music students through a series of master classes, career seminars, and a composition reading session/ workshop featuring music by ECU student composers, written specifically for this occasion.

**Welcome** - written and recorded by Gwendolyn Kuhlmann

### **Prologue: INFLUENCE**

**Voices of Consequence** - Garrett Mendelow

**Bad News** - Kaley Lane Eaton

### **ACT I: THE BREAKDOWN**

**Monologue: The Wrong Questions** - written by Gwendolyn Kuhlmann

**(this sentence here fills the) AIR** - Max Hundelshausen

*Pause*

### **ACT II: THE HEALING**

**Clear the AIR** - sound healing meditation improvised by Emily Thorner

**Monologue 2: What did you just do?** - written by Gwendolyn Kuhlmann

**Lunar** from *Crossing Songs* by Laura Shipsey

### **ACT III: THE INTEGRATION**

**Berio Sequenza III** by Luciano Berio

### **ACT IV: THE TRANSFORMATION**

**LOOP 2: "I AM"** - improvisation by Emily Thorner

*(beginning seamlessly out of Loop 2)*

**Ascension Meditation** - participatory improvisation lead by Emily Thorner

## Program Notes:

### Director's Note:

When Emily came to me with this project, she knew that it was important. She knew that it was about healing. But a big question remained - how did all the different pieces connect?

What was it really about? Electronics? Technology and how it interacts with our souls?

At this point, I had been working for about nine months as a copywriter in MoonRising, her spiritual healing business. Which is to say, I had spent 9 months going deep into Emily's story, helping her delve into what her path of spiritual healing looked like and to articulate it - how it feels, what you have to overcome, where your life goes after you make that leap.

I knew immediately - as much as technology is a key element of this evening, technology is only the expression of the person wielding it. It can bring out the best or the worst in our humanity - it can amplify and deepen the wounds, or it can help us heal them.

This evening is a story of transformation - of the pain, the process, and the redemption. It's where we get to experience all of who Emily is - her story, her artistry as a vocalist, and her powerful work that will move you beyond the voice and into the healing realm.

And it's an invitation to you. To go on this journey with her, to accept what she is offering at whatever level you're ready to receive it, whether or not you can completely understand it right now.

I'm excited for you.

- Gwendolyn Kuhlmann

### A note from Emily:

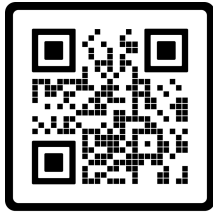
STATE OF BEING was an idea that began in 2019, in the middle of my own transformational journey, and after taking a giant leap to moving from Boston to Germany before later moving to the UK.

Since the beginning of this idea, within my own business called MoonRising which began in 2018, I created 12 programs of transformation for hundreds of clients and have seen hundreds conquer confidence, fear...but more so, help them find their voice, call in love, wealth, and completely shift their world in what is possible by breaking down what was blocking their path.

It was created to bring you into a world that has been the single biggest game changer in my life, and the catalyst for hundreds I've worked with, thus empowering the world to find their inner power from within.

At one point or another we all ask ourselves: how can we access and step into our potential? This is **that** doorway. Our doorway to shifting our vibration, our energy... in a world where we have proof that EVERYTHING is energy. Our doorway into creating a new future no matter what your current or your past is.

Lean in. Allow yourself to see yourself IN this. Come with an open mind and an open heart. Don't let your mind dictate. Be present. In doing so, you might find yourself in a space within. If this evening speaks to you, I equally invite you to be amongst the first to use a platform that enables EVERYONE to have transformation – a platform I am custom creating, along with Gwendolyn, which releases Christmas 2022. For the waitlist: [www.moon-rising.com](http://www.moon-rising.com)



Waitlist for MoonRising Platform

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Voices of Consequence by Garrett Mendelow (b. 1989)**

Commissioned by Emily Thorner

*“Voices of Consequence...”* (2022) is a stand-alone tape piece meant as a prologue to a recital program. The composition itself consists of a myriad of sounds and effects in order to set the ominous tone for the work. But out of the opening sonic material, an excerpt from President Ronald Reagan’s February 1981 address to the nation is heard; “You won’t like it. I didn’t like it.” From here, the performer is free to input recorded voices, which are reading recent credible news stories from around the world that are either considered to be bad or sad news. These news stories should be layered on top of one another gradually until they become almost a wall of sound. This sound of stories will then finally crescendo into a prescribed point in the tape track, and the piece fades into the beginning of the concert.

It is commonplace for us to block out the trauma and hurt that surrounds us in order to try and live the life we’ve all worked for. But though ignorance can be blissful at times, being apathetic can also cause great harm to that which we strive to preserve. It is the moments where we face the noise and the heavy burdens we are confronted with, and open our eyes to the struggles of others in this small world that we truly gain empowerment, release ourselves from a world of ever-compounding trauma, and have the ability to make an impact both in our own lives and the lives of others. – Garrett Mendelow

## **BAD NEWS (2020)**

Kaley Lane Eaton

Commissioned by ultra-soprano Emily Thorner in 2020 for her solo and electronics project, "BAD NEWS is meant to address the questions of bending our will to the forces of surveillance. Dark!"

*Every time you perform or practice this piece the bass line from the electronics will be at a randomized tempo and pitch level which leaves it to the singer to choose the appropriate interval in relationship to what is written.*

## **(this sentence here fills the) AIR (2019)**

**Max Hundelshausen**

The idea for STATE OF BEING began in a time of creation of AIR with Max Hundelshausen. AIR exists in 6 movements: Preparation, Meditation on One Voice, Embryo, BEING, Influx, and Cadenza Through the Looking Glass and goes through the process of choosing to go inward, facing your deepest shadow self, a moment of "breaking the self open" and some of the most raw and real moments of facing your inner demons. The line "so much lighter than air" exists to not only speak about the virtuosity of the voice but also the feeling one receives after releasing something significant internally. 98% of the electronics are created from recordings of Emily Thorner in collaboration. There will be moments that you cannot tell what is machine vs. human in the present moment and that is part of the incredible effect of this piece.

**CLEAR THE AIR** - A short cleansing of the opening act through breath and sound

*Lunar* (2022) is an exploration of something childlike and curious in sound, a small glimpse of that part of the inner world which remains young and vulnerable throughout life. Written in part after Italo Calvino's 'The Distance of the Moon' and the impossible task of reaching across that distance, the song also reflects on the cyclic patterns that exist even in stillness, and the gargantuan January wolf moon which hung in the sky around the time I was first working on the piece.

In its original form *Lunar* is the first song in a cycle for soprano and sinfonietta entitled *Crossing Songs*, commissioned by Britten Pears Arts for the Aldeburgh Festival. *Crossing Songs* was written through a process of intense collaboration, exploring the possibilities of Emily's dual role as both singer and healer, as well as fragments of the rich texts of Bengalis polymath Rabindranath Tagore. The songs are a surrealist reflection on things both deeply human, and completely indescribable.

*Crossing Songs* was first performed by Emily Thorner and the Britten Pears Contemporary Ensemble, conducted by Jonathan Berman at the Aldeburgh Festival in 2022. Emily later asked me to make an adaptation for solo soprano, beginning with this new version of *Lunar* for her State of Being tour.

**Berio Sequenza III** is born from a series of 14 compositions for extended techniques. "In Sequenza III the emphasis is given to the sound symbolism of vocal and sometimes visual gestures, with their accompanying "shadows of meaning", and the associations and conflicts suggested by them. For this reason Sequenza III can also be considered as a dramatic essay whose story, so to speak, is the relationship between the soloist and her own voice. Originally written for Cathy Barbarian, this is a customizable piece and in STATE OF BEING we are using it as a relationship between the self and inner expression as it relates to the integration stage of healing (processing.)

**"I AM"** - As our thoughts ultimately become things, this exists to reprogram our inner state of being and move us into a higher state of consciousness.

**Ascension Meditation** asks us to truly step forward and allow the present moment. This also invites YOU to participate and become part of the music as we close this experience.

## **Biographies**



International "ultra-soprano" (Second Inversion, WA, USA) and "new music rising star" (The Stranger, WA, USA) **Emily Thorner** is a leading soprano in contemporary operas, orchestras, and chamber ensembles. Known for her command of stratospheric high notes, Ms. Thorner is highly sought-after for world premieres due to her unusually high range, fearless virtuosity, breathtaking characters, and ability to jump into roles that other Sopranos have left. Invited to relocate to London on a Tier 1 Exceptional Talent visa, Ms. Thorner was the leading Soprano in Hotel Paradiso, a contemporary opera by Clement Power in Bolzano Italy, gave the world premiere of Crossing Songs by Laura Shipsey written for her voice and containing a rare Ab<sub>6</sub> in the Aldeburgh Festival this June 2022, and was a winner of the NYIOPS international anon auditions, being the only vocalist to present contemporary opera.

In New Music Festivals, she has been the star Soprano in Acht Brücken (DE), the Aldeburgh Festival (UK), Donaueschinger Musiktage, Bang on a Can New Festival (USA), Impuls Festival (Austria), Splice Festival, and the Ruhrtiennale festival, bringing her to Italy, USA, Germany, Austria, and England. She has collaborated with Chroma Ensemble (England), Hub New Music, Sound Icon, Boston Musica Viva, Sound Energy, Kin of the Moon (USA) and is known for her recording of Wolfgang Rihm's Frage containing over twenty-two high F's and beyond.

Originally from Boston, MA, USA, she now resides in London, UK after being invited to relocate to England on a Tier 1 Extraordinary Talent Visa and is under representation by HOME TALENT GROUP (UK).



**Gwendolyn Kuhlmann** (Creative Director) is a writer, director, podcaster, singer, and visionary. After 10 years as an opera and concert singer, with an international career as a soloist and professional chorister that took her from Atlanta to Berlin to San Francisco and back, she has found her own voice in storytelling for the operatic and concert stage by asking: How can we use the forms and the music that we have to tell larger stories that reach beyond the concert stage? How can we make an experience for the audience, one that heals, illuminates, and helps people feel heard? How can our work be of service?

In her work as the host of *Makin' It in Opera*, a podcast about artists who are finding their own voices and subverting the Industry Pipeline path that fails to serve either the artists or the art form, she has seen the effects of empowering artists by helping them articulate their own stories. These two objectives: making art that is more than the sum of its parts, and helping artists to articulate their stories, have come together in her work with Emily Thorner on *STATE OF BEING*.



**Garrett Mendelow** (b.1989) is a solo and collaborative percussionist from the United States. Though his interest in percussion extends to many different facets of the art, he dedicates much of his time to contemporary percussion performance practices and new music in a wide variety of settings. In the last decade, Garrett has appeared in national and international venues throughout North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and regions of the Asian continent. Venues include the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Muziekgebouw Eindhoven, De Doelen Concert Hall in Rotterdam, Hill Auditorium, the Vienna Muziekverein, and the Salzburg Großes Festspielhaus. Major festival appearances include PASIC (2013), the Cross-Linx Festival (2014), the Tromp Percussion Festival (2014), the Transplanted Roots Festival (2015), and the International Society for Performing Artsconvention in New York (2017). In November of 2020, Garrett's first solo album, 'Speaking to His Craft,' was released in collaboration with the Orpheus Classical Music Label. He is currently preparing for his next recording project of works by Iannis Xenakis. As an educator, Garrett has presented masterclasses and clinics at universities and conservatories around the world.



**Kaley Lane Eaton** is a conservatory-trained classical pianist and vocalist who fell into creating electronic music shortly after a stint playing Baroque lute, Seattle composer, singer-songwriter and producer Kaley Lane Eaton's music is colored by this eclecticism. Her "disconcertingly lovely" (Seattle Weekly) compositions combine innovative digital processes with ancient performance practices, questioning humanity's growing dependence on technology and the resulting exploitation of the planet. Most recently, her work has been commissioned and performed by the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Modern Orchestra, the Fresh Squeezed Opera Company (NYC), and Karin Stevens Dance, and has enjoyed support from such organizations as the Jack Straw Cultural Center, Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, the Allied Arts Foundation, the International Alliance for Women in Music, and 4Culture. With flutist/composer Leanna Keith and violist/composer Heather Bentley, Eaton co-directs Kin of the Moon, an improvisation-centric and technology-friendly chamber troupe in Seattle. KOTM reflects Eaton, Keith, and Bentley's collective values: that the pursuit of higher vibrational states, whether through Music, movement, artistic creation, scholarship, or any kind of curiosity, is the destiny of humanity, and is the birthright of every person on this beautiful planet.



**Max-Lukas Hundelshausen** (\*1991 in Germany) is a tonmeister, sound director and composer.

After finishing his precollege studies, he continued to study at the Erich-Thienhaus-Institute at Hochschule für Musik Detmold with Minas Borboudakis, Fabien Lévy, Mauro Lanza, Carola Bauckholt and Gilbert Nouno. After his Master's degree he continued to study composition with Wolfgang Rihm at the Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe in 2018. In 2019 he started writing a doctoral thesis in musicology regarding conservation techniques for electronic music. To widen his perspective he visited masterclasses with Brian Ferneyhough, George Aperghis, Johannes Kreidler, Hans Tutschku and many more. Max received multiple regional, national and international awards for his compositions, including the audience's and jury's Carl-Orff-Awards, the ad libitum Award, the federal award for composition (five times) and the Young Talents' Award issued by the Berlin Philharmonics. Additionally, he is the founder of Studio Maximedes in the region of Frankfurt am Main, Germany.





**Laura Shipsey** (b.1991) is a UK based composer of acoustic concert music, multidimensional installations and semi-improvisatory game pieces. Her work explores approaches to form, multiplicity, and animal behaviour, and has been performed by ensembles and artists including: Britten Pears Contemporary Ensemble, Alpaca Ensemble, violinist Fenella Humphreys, pianist Ana Beatriz Ferreira, Aldworth Philharmonic Orchestra, and Cambridge, Heidelberg, Montpellier Youth Orchestra. Recent premieres include *The Time Being* for sinfonietta, and the song cycle *Crossing Songs* for soprano Emily Thorner and the Britten Pears Contemporary Ensemble, conducted by Jonathan Berman, at the Aldeburgh Festival 2022.

Laura is currently completing a PhD in composition, supported by a Cardiff University studentship, under the supervision of Arlene Sierra and David Beard. Her research explores discontinuity in music, questioning ideas of development, multiplicity, character, and line.



**Luciano Berio** (1925-2003) is, understandably, the only composer who did not directly write for Emily Thorner or STATE OF BEING. Luciano Berio was an Italian composer noted for his experimental work (in particular his 1968 composition *Sinfonia* and his series of virtuosic solo pieces titled *Sequenza*), and for his pioneering work in electronic music and is arguably one of the main composers to influence experimental “new” music. His early work was influenced by Igor Stravinsky and experiments with serial and electronic techniques, while his later works explore indeterminacy and the use of spoken texts as the basic material for composition.