

presents...

CAROLINE SHAW | Viola/Vocals/Composer
GABRIEL KAHANE | Piano/Vocals/Composer

Thursday, November 14, 2024 | 7:30pm

Herbst Theatre

KAHANE/SHAW **Hexagons**

Additional works to be announced.

This program is made possible in part by the generous support of Christian Jessen.

Caroline Shaw is represented by First Chair Promotion firstchairpromo.com

Gabriel Kahane is represented by MKI Artists
70 S. Winooski Ave., #318, Burlington, VT 05401 mkiartists.com

Steinway Model D, Pro Piano, San Francisco

ARTIST PROFILES

San Francisco Performances presents Caroline Shaw for the first time.

Gabriel Kahane returns for the eighth time. He made his first appearance in January 2019 and has been curator of both the 2024 and 2025 PIVOT series.



Caroline Shaw is a musician who moves among roles, genres, and mediums, trying to imagine a world of sound that has never been heard before but has always existed. She works often in collaboration with others, as producer, composer, violinist, and vocalist. Caroline is the recipient of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in Music, several Grammy awards, an honorary doctorate from Yale, and a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship.

Recent projects include the score to *Fleishman is in Trouble* (FX/Hulu), vocal work with Rosalía (MOTOMAMI), the score to Josephine Decker's *The Sky Is Everywhere* (A24/Apple), music for the National Theatre's production of *The Crucible* (dir. Lyndsey Turner), Justin Peck's *Partita* with NY City Ballet, a new stage work *LIFE* (Gandini Juggling/Merce Cunningham Trust), the premiere of *Microfictions Vol. 3* for NY Philharmonic and Roomful of Teeth, a live orchestral score for Wu Tsang's silent film *Moby Dick* co-composed with Andrew Yee, two albums on Nonesuch (*Evergreen* and *The Blue Hour*), the score for Helen Simoneau's dance work *Delicate Power*, tours of *Graveyards & Gardens* (co-created immersive theatrical work with Vanessa Goodman), and tours with Sō

Percussion featuring songs from *Let The Soil Play Its Simple Part* (Nonesuch), amid occasional chamber music appearances as violist (Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, La Jolla Music Society).

Caroline has written over 100 works in the last decade, for Anne Sofie von Otter, Davóne Tines, Yo Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Dawn Upshaw, LA Phil, Philharmonia Baroque, Seattle Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Aizuri Quartet, The Crossing, Dover Quartet, Calidore Quartet, Brooklyn Rider, Miro Quartet, I Giardini, Ars Nova Copenhagen, Ariadne Greif, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Britt Festival, and the Vail Dance Festival. She has contributed production to albums by Rosalía, Woodkid, and Nas. Her work as vocalist or composer has appeared in several films, tv series, and podcasts including *The Humans*, *Bombshell*, *Yellowjackets*, *Maid*, *Dark*, *Beyoncé's Homecoming*, *Tár*, *Dolly Parton's America*, and *More Perfect*. Her favorite color is yellow, and her favorite smell is rosemary.



Hailed as "one of the finest songwriters of the day" by *The New Yorker*, **Gabriel Kahane** is a musician and storyteller whose work spans the theater, club, and concert hall.

Highlights of the 2024-25 season include a return to the New York stage in a production of two solo works, *Magnificent Bird* and *Book of Travelers*, which Gabriel performs in repertory at Playwrights Horizons. In addition, he tours as a duo with fellow composer/performer Caroline Shaw in the United States and Europe. This season also

witnesses the premiere of two major concert works: an orchestral oratorio, co-commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony and Oregon Symphony, chronicling the aftermath of the 2020 Alameda Wildfire; and a clarinet concerto for Anthony McGill, which premieres with the Orlando Philharmonic. Other performance highlights include a solo debut with the Orchestre National de Lyon, as well as Kahane's San Francisco conducting debut in Carla Kihlstedt's *Twenty-six Little Deaths*.

Gabriel's discography includes five LPs as a singer-songwriter; *The Fiction Issue*, an album of chamber music with string quartet Brooklyn Rider; as well as *emergency shelter intake form*, which was heard last season in San Francisco and London, having been commissioned and recorded by the Oregon Symphony, for whom Kahane is now in his second term as Creative Chair. Upcoming recordings include *Heirloom*, a piano concerto written for his father, the noted pianist and conductor Jeffrey Kahane; as well as the debut album from Council, an ongoing project with violinist, composer, and conductor Pekka Kuusisto.

As a theater artist, Kahane made his off-Broadway debut with the score for *February House*, which received its world premiere at the Public Theater in 2012. He made his Brooklyn Academy of Music debut in 2014 with *The Ambassador*, in a production directed by John Tiffany. In 2018, he wrote incidental music for the Broadway revival of Kenneth Lonergan's *The Waverly Gallery*, starring Elaine May and Lucas Hedges.

Kahane maintains a diverse roster of collaborators from various corners of the musical universe, ranging from Phoebe Bridgers, Paul Simon, Sufjan Stevens, and Sylvan Esso to the Danish String Quartet, Roomful of Teeth, and Attacca Quartet. As a writer, he has been published by *The New Yorker* online and *The New York Times*; a newsletter and collection of essays on music, literature, and politics can be found at gabrielkahane.substack.com.

A two-time MacDowell Fellow, Kahane received the 2021 Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He lives in Portland, Oregon, with his family.

Hexagons

Music & Lyrics by Gabriel Kahane & Caroline Shaw

I Dreamed A Book

I dreamed a book
With swirling letters
And circular pages
And a vibrating spine

That could teach the people
To see their neighbor,
To see their faces
As a work of the sublime.

But in these infinite hallways
With their Vegas mirrors,
Where illusion and delusion
Become nearer in the mind,

And thundering voices
Become black key choirs—
Where the long notes are the wrong notes
The book is hard to find.

So in these hours
Of smoke and shellfire,
Of tattered forests
Beneath a sky that burns red,

I sing the message
Or all that I remember
Into the ears of my neighbor
Who's got a lock on my head.

A Loaf of Bread

A loaf of bread, a pyramid, an impossible rhyme
Vacuum, bicycle, a burden of time
Index of rhythms, list of tones
Catalog of catalogs, none of them known

Bach's thirty-seventh bar on a Tuesday morning
Dotted quarter just to pass the day
Twelve choices twelve upon twelve upon twelve upon
Passing tones glide across the array
Of unsolved nouns
Grasping at the unresolved

Dice Game

The blue black night,
The shelves, the fruit, the light,
I drank from rainwater
Pooling in the halls
Of whispered threats.

We played the game,
The dice, the disk, the cup,
To while away broken centuries,
We laughed and placed our bets.

My Grave Shall Be the Fathomless Air

Now that my eyes
Can hardly decipher
What I write,
I am preparing to die—
Just a few leagues
From the hexagon
Where I was born.

When I am dead
There will be no lack
Of pious hands
To throw me over the railing,
My grave shall be the fathomless air.

Let Heaven Exist

Cast down, wasted, disappeared,
Wasted, extinguished, ninety floors up.
Intolerable, wandering, your death,
And though my place be hell
Let heaven exist,
And though my place be hell
Let heaven exist.

Faithful, gospel, prophecy,
Precious translations,
Imperfect facsimile,
A cryptograph, apology, your breath,
And though my place be hell
Let heaven exist,
And though my place be hell
Let heaven exist.

Home

Never any repetition
Neverending transposition
Rooms of artificial missions
An echo of a view
Diagrams of every syntax
Mapping out the pathways through the stacks
Of the taxonomy of you

All is sacred, but nothing holy
Infinity proceeding slowly

My footsteps are shaking the shelves that are breaking
With all of the silences hidden within.
I cannot remember my home and my center.
These hallways have swallowed my bones and my skin.

In rooms and in hallways i look for you all the ways
Within every catalog, index, and aisle.
I keep on believing i'll find in my grieving
The thing i've been seeking for thousands of miles.

Cryptograph

And in this winding realm
There's such an overwhelm
With XL XL V

Put blinders on your eyes
So you will recognize
Only the books you're meant to see

Oh time, the gods put cloth over the clocks
You sing a nonsense rhyme,
Throwing windows through the rocks.

This year you're bent with rage,
Torn out every seventh page,
You think it's all a lie.

Decode the cryptograph,
Turns out it makes you laugh—
It says we're gonna die.

Oh time
The gods put cloth over the clocks
You sing a nonsense rhyme,
Throwing windows through the rocks.

The shelves, the shafts of air,
The stairways everywhere
In endless perfect form.

A life of secret tongues
And men with long black guns
Preparing for a storm.

Oh time
The gods put cloth over the clocks
You sing a nonsense rhyme,
Throwing windows through the rocks.

O time
Reading scripture through white tears,
And an old line
We've been singing through the years.

The Blind Librarian

I have traveled all my life
Through cobwebbed hexagons
I have run my calloused finger
Over the dust on all the shelves.

Oh

I have spoken to wild-eyed librarians
Who sang of volumes they'd killed to see
Only to learn that they contained
Nothing more than random letters
For hundreds of pages:
XLXLXLXLXLV

Oh to be

Since the first fog augured
That my eyes might be failing
I set about to memorize
Every book in my hexagon.

I was sure I had long flipped
Through every appendix and afterword
Carefully, carefully.

Imagine my surprise
When I found the redwood guide,
When I found the redwood guide
When I saw it on the shelf,

I couldn't close my eyes,
No I couldn't close my eyes,
When I found the redwood guide,
Oh I read it to myself.

I understood the category,
The concept of tree.
But what is California?
And a redwood—what's that?

Oh to be a blind
Oh to be a blind
Oh to be a blind
Oh to be a blind

Oh, to have walked through a thousand doors,
Yet none of them leads to a forest, a sand dune,
A craggy beach, a grassy hilltop,
A mountainside for making love
After a shotgun wedding?

Oh to be a blind
Oh to be a blind
Oh to be a blind
Oh to be a blind

Oh, to be told that the total domain
Of your existence is not to exceed
These six walls, these four shelves,
These two doors, the ticking of the clock.

I sat on the floor of my cell
And read about these enormous trees

That don't so much kiss the sky
As they do smother it,
Smother the sky.

Oh to be a blind
Oh to be a blind
Oh to be a blind
Oh to be a blind

Oh to be a blind librarian

The light is always on
In each battered hexagon
In each battered hexagon
It is buzzing without end,

And all are taught to sing
Each of seven words that ring,
Yes these seven words that ring
It's a personal requiem:

My grave shall be the fathomless air

Fathomless, but where are the trees?
Where is the heartbreak,
The two ancient lovers
Drinking coffee
At the edge of a pier,
At the edge of the world
On a June morning
In northern Michigan?