



Why

the **WOMEN** have
SOMETHING to **SAY**

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Nancy Manocherian's
the cell
theatre

Presented by Nancy Manocherian's the cell theatre (Kira Simring, Artistic Director),
The Why Collective (Sydney Anderson, Artistic Director),
and Intersection Arts (Nicole Kenley-Miller, Artistic Director)

Cast, in order of featured appearance

Jessica Blau (<i>she/her</i>).....	mezzo-soprano
Cynthia Clayton (<i>she/her</i>).....	soprano
Mary-Angela T. Granberry (<i>she/her</i>).....	actor/dancer
Isabelle Ganz (<i>she/her</i>).....	mezzo-soprano
Shannon Hesse (<i>she/her</i>).....	pianist
Ingrid Gerling (<i>she/her</i>).....	violinist
Tali Morgulis (<i>she/her</i>).....	pianist
Marianna Morgulis.....	actor
Lisa Borik Vickers (<i>she/her</i>).....	soprano
Sydney Anderson (<i>she/her</i>).....	soprano
Gwendolyn D. Alfred (<i>she/her</i>).....	soprano
Newsha Farahani (<i>she/her</i>).....	actor/visual artist
Gracie Ibemere (<i>she/her</i>).....	bassist
Nicole Kenley-Miller (<i>she/her</i>).....	mezzo-soprano
Laura Dearman (<i>she/her</i>).....	dancer
Uila Marx (<i>they/them & she/her</i>).....	dancer
Manatsu Tanaka (<i>they/them</i>).....	dancer

*all text was written by the performer herself

Creative and Technical Team

Nicole Kenley-Miller, Conceiver/Director/Workshop Facilitator
Sydney Anderson, Executive Producer/Assistant Director
Madeline Styskal (*she/her*), Composer
Laura Dearman, Lead Choreographer
Janine Dworin (*she/her*), Graphic Designer
Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton (*she/her*), Dramaturg/Writing Consultant
Julian Wild (*he/him*), Director of Production/Technical Director
Zoe Griffith (*she/her*), Lighting Designer
Macy Lyne (*she/her*), Costume Consultant

Scan this code to follow along with the script,
and to read more about the cast and creative
team in our digital program



A note from the director

As a poet and a singer, I have always found it strange that modern classical music has no analog for the singer-songwriter tradition of folk and popular music. Classical singers never sing their own words. We always sing the words that someone else wrote, that “someone” usually being a man. In 2015, I sought to change that by commissioning my composer and friend Daniel Sigmon to set my own poems to music. The resulting composition was a song cycle called *Passages*, and it was the most transcendent experience I had ever had on stage. I had never known the power of singing my own words!

Having experienced this for myself, I was eager to give other musicians a taste of it too. At the same time that I was trying to find the right vehicle for the project, women's rights were in the forefront of the news and we were a little over a year away from the centennial of the ratification of the 19th amendment, in which women (albeit not all women) finally were able to vote. I thought, what better way to try my experiment than with the voices of women - and not just singers, but instrumentalists too? Why not have every woman on the stage tell her story through spoken text and song - sort of like a *Vagina Monologues*, but about voices instead?

I assembled a group of women musicians who I knew would be willing to take the risk on something never tried before. We started with a workshop in August 2019 talking about our voices - how our voices have been silenced, how we have found what we want to say, how we're still figuring that out. We had two more workshops with dramaturg Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton who helped us figure out how to turn our stories into theatre. Then each woman went away and wrote their own monologue, and if they were a singer, a song text too. The song texts and the monologues were given to our brilliant composer Madeline Styskal, who fashioned them together into a musical tapestry of women's voices which we presented in a workshop version in Houston in August 2021.

Fast forward to last Fall when I got a call from friend and creative powerhouse Sydney Anderson of The Why Collective, with whom I had worked at University of Houston, asking if we could put together a new version of the workshop show presented in Houston to be the final production in her residency at the cell. We began steadily working and fundraising to bring the ten women from the original cast to New York to combine with three women whose newly-composed scenes are now added to the show. We have also added more theatricality to each scene and transformed the show with choreography created by Laura Dearman, a dynamic artist whose work I have been so privileged to get to know over these past few months.

I am forever grateful to Sydney Anderson and The Why Collective for giving this production a new voice in a new space for a new audience. Artists who devote their careers to making things completely new are rare these days and The Why Collective is doing the hard work of creating art that asks the important questions of today. As the founder of Intersection Arts in Houston which shares a similar mission, it is such an encouragement to share this journey together through collaboration on *The Womxn Have Something to Say*.

The stories you hear tonight are the stories not just of womxn, but of humanity. For perhaps the first time ever, you will hear the power of classical music delivering not the words of someone who isn't in the room or maybe not even alive, but you will hear the direct personal truth of each artist as they wrote it for themselves.

The innovative stage director Peter Sellars says that theatre is “shared space.” Come revel in the chance to share space together as we tell our stories; and perhaps you'll remember a bit of your story that needs telling too.

-Nicole Kenley-Miller

This production was made possible by...

Ann Faget, Akiko Konishi, Andy Miller, Barbara and Paul Kenley, Barbara Shipp, Becky Burns, Catherine Burns, Christy Larimer-Compson, Cynthia Clayton Vasquez, Daphne Gerling, Dominique McCormick, Doug and Karen Anderson, Erinn Michelle Hatter, Gary Wurl, Hannah Aloumouati, Jami Platt, Janet Mills, Jerry Aucoin, John Anderson, Julius L Sanchez, Karen Waxler, Ken Milder, Kristina Hulten, Miljana Bajic, Nicole Kenley-Miller, Peter Herman, Rhonda Sweeney, Rob Smith, Ron M Trenkler-Thompson, Shannon Hesse, Shari Ramming, Susan Thompson, Sue and Jim Anderson

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The Why Collective is especially grateful to the staff of Nancy Manocherian's the cell theatre for making this event and residency possible

To Support more projects like this one, and to provide seed money for future writing workshops (like the one below), please consider a donation to the project fund via this code. 100% of donations will go to pay the artists you saw today and support those of tomorrow.



Special One-Day Event: May 14, 11:00am-1:00pm



Experience the same process our cast went through to begin to craft their stories for the stage. "What Do YOU Have to Say" is a creative workshop exploring our inner voices through facilitated discussion, writing, movement, visual art, and music.

All genders welcome!
No experience necessary.



Scan this code to reserve your spot!

Collage art by Emilie Karl
Graphic Art by Janine Dworin and Micaela Bottari