



MUSIC THEATRE OF MADISON

AN AMERICAN

MYTHOLOGY

THE CONCEPT ALBUM

CLARA ADAMS

L.E.X.

CHRISTIAN ADAMS

AUTUMN MARIA REED

MAAZ AHMED

HAYLEY SAN FILLIPPO

JACKEY BOELKOW

KAILEA SAPLAN

ANTHONY CAO

SHAYNE STELIGA

CAMILLE HUNT

MARK WURZELBACHER



Individual sponsor: Hayley Mason

THE TEAM

Directed by Adam Qutaishat and Nathan Fosbinder

Produced by Meghan Randolph

Production Manager: Kristen Emery

Additional Assistance: Mark Wurzelbacher

Sound Engineer: Grant Blaschka

Recorded at Audio For the Arts, Madison Wisconsin, April 2021

SONGS:

1. Here Comes The Fire
2. Motherland Part One: Discovery
3. Dreamcatcher
4. Motherland Part Two: Security
5. Nightmare
6. Motherland Part Three: Prosperity
7. Disgraced
8. Motherland Part Four: Unity
9. The Man in the Sky
10. Motherland Part Five: Liberty
11. Star-Reader

STUDIO MUSICIANS:

Helen Akavian (Guitar - Star-Reader)

Michael Parrish (Percussion - Star-Reader, Dream Catcher)

Shayne Steliga (Guitar - Dream Catcher)

Anthony Cao (Piano - The Man in the Sky)

Adam Qutaishat (various)

Mark Wurzelbacher (various)

TRACK PRODUCTION:

L.E.X (Here Comes the Fire)

Autumn Maria Reed (Motherland)

Chris Adams (Nightmare)

Mark Wurzelbacher (Disgraced)

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

When thinking about the future of theatre and music, and the intersection at which they meet, I am constantly finding myself drawn to three words: innovative, diverse and genuine. I believe that those three words are at the heart of *An American Mythology*. What began as a project to reach audiences in a new way and provide a platform for BBIPOC artists has continued to grow into something that can help us imagine the future of this field. Bringing together artists from all genres, lifestyles, experience levels, and skill sets and then allowing them to write their own stories has yielded the results white American theatre always told us we couldn't achieve. This album is a beautiful celebration of what you can accomplish by engaging with your community's artists and letting them tell their stories.

The stories on this album are heartbreaking, exhilarating, educating, and a million other things. But one theme holds true: They are all, in some way, hopeful. When we created the concept of *An American Mythology*, we set out to tell some of the stories that would fill an American canon of heroes, myths, monsters, and legends. And while I think we accomplished that, these characters and stories feel so much more... *human* than those of ages past. And isn't that what makes Mythology enduring? It's universal understanding of the human condition. And that's the future of this art form: Musical theatre that universally represents the human condition. I'm hopeful that I will see that day. This album is one step closer.

-Adam Qutaishat

MTM has long been looking at what's next in musical theatre. This album takes 'what's next' and delves even further into 'what even is musical theatre?' By exploring different song forms, different genres, styles, and of course, and through the very different people who created them, this is a look into what the art of storytelling in song can be. From fast-moving hip hop to soaring ballads to some sounds more familiar to the musical lovers' ear, each song on this album showcases the individual voice and story of the people who wrote it. That may be rare so far in the musical theatre canon, but I am excited to be part of a piece that is, in fact, making it 'what's next.'

-Nathan Fosbinder

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

This little seed of an idea turned into such a remarkable collaboration of artists. To say I am thrilled is an understatement.

This year, our fifteenth anniversary, MTM is embracing all of the ways that theatre can live outside of a designated space. Whether you're in your car, at the gym, or relaxing on your couch, we hope this album takes you on a journey and that you get wrapped up in the endless possibilities, questions, and ideas that it contains. What is theatre? We're only just beginning to find out. My sincerest thanks to every artist who has been involved in this and will be involved in its forthcoming journey.

-Meghan Randolph

ABOUT MUSIC THEATRE OF MADISON



Music Theatre of Madison is a professional theatre now in its 15th anniversary season. Since its inception, MTM has focused on compensating local artists and producing works that represent the future of the musical theatre genre and its ability to connect community members. We have 37 full productions to our credit, as well as numerous readings and concerts, and have done outreach work with schools, libraries, senior centers, and elsewhere throughout South Central Wisconsin. We have presented locally-written work every year since 2018 and in 2021 we are focusing entirely on new works by Wisconsin artists. Our company has been nationally recognized and celebrated in American Theatre Magazine, through Americans for the Arts, the National Arts Marketing Project, and the National Alliance for Musical Theatre. Locally, we've been on "Best of the Arts" lists in Capital Times and/or Isthmus every year for a decade. Learn more at www.mtmadison.com.

Music Theatre of Madison acknowledges the history of bigotry and oppression in the theatre industry and works to counteract these wrongs through amplification of marginalized voices, elimination of prejudicial practices, and development of a brave space that is safe from all types of harm.

Music Theatre of Madison performs and works on the ancestral land called Teejop (Four Lakes) of the Ho-Chunk Nation (People of the Sacred Voice). They were forcibly removed from this stolen land many times and continued to return despite the danger. Their songs and stories tell of their proud history being here for more than three ice ages. MTM respects the sovereignty of the First Nations in Wisconsin. We acknowledge and celebrate the thriving Indigenous peoples of our community -- those who were here, those who are here, and those who will be here -- as we continue to bring new ideas and new artistic works to Madison's cultural landscape.

MTM's first production, HAIR, 2006



HOW TO ENJOY THIS ALBUM

An American Mythology is a concept album. This means it's a first step on the road to a full production. It's a chance to hear a series of songs together and imagine how they might translate to the stage. This piece is a revue or song cycle, meaning a series of stories that are unrelated on the surface, but have common themes.

Here are some ways to engage with the album as you listen:

- Imagine how the songs might work on a stage. Would you add people to perform different roles? Would there be dance? Multimedia effects? What kind of lighting would be interesting?
- Try to pick out similarities in melody and themes amongst all of the songs on the album.
- What elements do you hear that remind you of musicals you know? What do you hear that you've never heard before in a musical?
- Ask yourself: What do you think is a myth you've lived by or through? Was this myth a fallacy, or a guidepost?
- Think about or create some visual art based on the songs.
- What do you think is the greatest American myth?

SCENES FROM THE STUDIO



"HERE COMES THE FIRE"

In the opening number, using rap and hip-hop, the element of fire is presented as a living creature, examining his powerful and destructive nature at the hands of humans through the century, particularly in Black people's search for freedom and equality.

Links

[Lyrics](#)

[About the Stono Rebellion](#)

[About the German Coast Uprising](#)

[About the Los Angeles riots](#)

[About the 2020 social justice protests](#)

[L.E.X's website](#)

About the artist



L.E.X (real name Alexis Dean-Composer, Performer, Track Production) is a clean Hip-Hop artist, teacher, camp counselor, DJ and more. His dream is to positively change the world, and it started in his hometown Milwaukee, WI. The mission is to speak to kids and adults, and empower them to go chase their dreams. Anything is possible. Dreams start young.

Artist Statement

"Fire has always been used to spark change, shed light on the darkness, and encourage growth. "Here Comes The Fire" gives the listener a glimpse of the rebellious spirit and compassionate voice of an unsung hero. I wrote this song to educate people who believe my Black ancestors weren't resistant and fighters all throughout history, and also to highlight the spiritual connection that we have with the world and all its elements."

MOTHERLAND (PARTS ONE-FIVE)

This five-part progressive series uses hip hop, rock, pop, and more to tell the story of a colonizer and the consequences of her actions.

Links

[Lyrics](#)

[Autumn Maria Reed's website](#)

About the artists



Autumn Maria Reed (Composer, Track Production) co-wrote "Something More" with Shaniqua "Nikko" Murphy (as Viola Davis) for "Beyond The Ingenue: Trailblazers." at MTM. Currently, Autumn has completed the first drafts of orchestrations for a new, full-length musical called "Two Princes" by Ralph Oscar Selby. Also, she's collaborating with Andrea Musher for her short operetta "Hark! The Park!" is a graduate of Berklee College of Music. She has performed double/electric bass with the Madison Community Orchestra, UW-BME, and UW-Waukesha String Orchestra. She released two EP albums and two singles including 2020's "You're *not #Woke." She volunteers with The Black String Triage Ensemble directed by Dayvin Hallmon.



Kailea Saplan (Composer, Performer) is a third generation Filipina-American actor, originally from the Big Island of Hawaii. After earning BA degrees in Theatre and Philosophy at Pacific University (Forest Grove, OR), she moved to Madison. Kailea is a teaching artist for Children's Theatre of Madison, Madison Public Library, and Whoopensocker. Recent credits: Princess Ka'iulani in Beyond the Ingenue: Trailblazers (Music Theatre of Madison); Mrs. Caine and Pauline in 10 Days in a Madhouse podcast production (Music Theatre of Madison); Ophelia in Hamlet (Madison Shakespeare Company); Mrs. Ramirez in Ten Days In A Madhouse (staged reading by Music Theatre of Madison); Benvolia in Romeo and Juliet (Theatre Lila); Olivia in Twelfth Night (University Theatre - UW Madison); Princess in Love's Labor's Lost (Portland Actors Ensemble); Malcolm in Macbeth (Original Practice Shakespeare Festival); and Romeo in Romeo and Juliet (Pacific University).

Artists' Statement

"MOTHERLAND is a creation myth sung in five movements.

Each of our movements is a pastiche of eras in American Musical Theatre: cinematic soundtrack, earthy industrial folk, rhythmic rap, intimate indie, and audacious alternative rock. It's a sonic representation of the American melting pot, a fusion of genres and cultures that signify unity and alliance. Well, at least, that's what our protagonist believes.

In this piece, we explore the mythos of America itself from our perspectives and lived experiences as women of color with diverse intersectional identities. We identify that which is both tantalizing and oppressive about the United States's particular brand of exceptionalism and liberation through the eyes of a well-intentioned woman who represents the spirit of this country."

DREAM CATCHER

Alongside an ancient ritual, using traditional Native American instruments, a grandmother tells a story about a mythical creature her family was tasked with protecting.

Links

[Lyrics](#)

[Shayne Steliga's website](#)

[Ojibwe Dictionary \(Language used in song\)](#)

[About the Ojibwe](#)

[About the Oneida](#)

About the artists



Shayne Steliga (Composer, Performer, Guitarist) attained a Theatre degree from UW-Green Bay and has devoted several years to stage acting as well as on-camera and voice-over projects. One of his career highlights was being the co-host of Public Television's Cultural Horizons. Along with acting, music is also one of Shayne's passions. Since 2005, he has steadily contributed lyrics and/or music to local bands Fadeback and Sorry, We're Open and has played the acoustic guitar in various theatrical productions.



Hayley San Fillippo (Composer, Performer) graduated with a BFA in Theater Performance from UW-Whitewater and has primarily worked in the Milwaukee area since. Credits include work with First Stage, All in Productions, Schmitz N Giggles, Windfall Theatre and Milwaukee Entertainment Group.

Artists' Statement

"Storytelling is a vital component of Native American culture. We wanted to honor this by crafting an original story that weaves in key, foundational aspects of our heritage. We hope the music not only supported this mission but also helped make this song compelling to listen to!"

NIGHTMARE

This inspiring tale of a young hero shows the power of following your dreams to the greatest heights through a combination of R&B, hip-hop, and gospel music.

[Lyrics](#)

[Nu Musik website](#)

About the artists



Camille Hunt (Composer, Performer) is a vocalist and vocal instructor and has been performing and teaching for various years. She is excited to collaborate on this project with her son and daughter. **Clara Adams (Composer, Performer)** is a very artistic and creative soul. She plays the guitar, sings and loves to use her artistic abilities to create in various ways. We are a musical family and bring a very diverse background of musical experience. We can't wait to get started on this project and are excited about working together in this capacity.



Chris Adams (Composer, Performer, Track Production) is collaborating with his mother, Camille Hunt, and sister, Clara Adams, on this project. He is a graduate of Winona State University and has received his bachelors in musical studies. He is an up and coming artist and is kicking off his Numusik brand in the process.

Artists' Statement

"We wanted to create a piece that was relatable to everyone. Although the piece is from a female perspective, this same story has been the reality for many people around the world. We hope you enjoy this song as much as we enjoyed creating it!"

DISGRACED

This hip-hop story tells the tale of a young man who takes a magical substance in order to better fit in and attempt to distance himself from his culture.

[Lyrics](#)

[Maaz's website](#)

[About the September 11 attacks](#)

[About discrimination toward South Asian populations after 9/11 \(Video content-sensitive material\)](#)

About the artist



Maaz Ahmed (Composer, Performer) is a junior at Marquette University, majoring in Theatre Arts and Digital Media. Maaz has been involved in the theatre since accidentally stumbling into his middle school choir room in the 7th grade and being drafted into running the light board for the school musical. Since then, Maaz has gone on to act, direct, design, write, and of course, run many more light boards. He most recently served as the Lighting Designer on *Silent Sky* at Marquette University.

Track produced by Mark Wurzelbacher. See bio on Creative Team page.
Please note that this song contains language and drug use references.

Artist Statement

"I wrote this song in an attempt to tell the tragic story of South Asian people treating our unique identities as expendable, in an attempt to appeal to white American society. I hope that when people listen to the track, they're reminded of why their individuality—the unique hodge-podge of identities that makes up every person—is valuable and beautiful."

THE MAN IN THE SKY

In this beautiful song, a boy grows up with confusing advice given to him from a mythical being in the heavens. As the boy becomes a man, he comes to painful and beautiful realizations.

[Lyrics](#)

[Anthony's website](#)

About the artist



Anthony Cao (Composer, Performer, Pianist) teaches music at Madison West High School. He has been the chorus master for Madison Opera since 2010 and has been a dueling piano player at the Ivory Room Piano Bar since 2006. He is also a music director, actor, and singer.

Artist Statement

"I often felt like I didn't fit in as an Asian kid growing up in an almost exclusively white community. However, with my dad not really around when I was little, I also didn't really know what being an "Asian kid" meant either. Mythology to me are stories we create when we don't understand, and "The Man in the Sky" is about the myth I created when I was little. While it's specific to my experience, I hope it also speaks more universally to the struggle that we all feel trying to understand who we are and where we fit in our world. Thank you to my mom and my brothers for living and reliving those experiences as a way to help me brainstorm."

STAR-READER

In this folk song, our closing number, a woman visits a fortune-teller and asks her to help her find her truth. The fortune-teller has some unexpected, yet powerful advice.

[Lyrics](#)

[History of the Romani people](#)

About the artist



Jackey Boelkow (Composer, Singer) is an actor currently located in Milwaukee, WI. She holds her BFA in Musical Theatre from UW Stevens Point and is currently a company member for Kohl's Wild Theatre. Jackey writes music, mostly on her ukulele, in her free time but this will be her first official recording.

Artist Statement

"I wrote Star-Reader as a social commentary on how Romani people have been perceived throughout history. The stories of Romani people have largely been erased from the American narrative and have instead become a romanticized and sexualized enigma. Roma people are most often portrayed as fortune tellers, magicians, and con-artists commonly being referred to as the slur, g*ypsy, which is an exonym given to the group by non-Romani or Gadge. In reality, many Roma people did rely on fortune telling as a means of survival, but it is only one small part of our colorful culture. This song was a way to bring back an element of humanity to the romanticized experience of the Romani people."

THE CREATIVE TEAM



Adam Qutaishat (Co-Director, Instrumentalist) is MTM's Associate Artistic Director. Adam has written music and lyrics for a variety of genres over his 15 year career as a composer and lyricist. Adam earned a degree in music from UW - Stevens Point. Adam's commissioned pieces include *Incidental Music for Romeo + Juliet*, *Snowy Owls* for SSA Choir and Piano, and *Lost in Thought* for Cello and Piano. They are also lead composer for the podcasts *The All-Arcadians*, *SHH*, and *WAIP*. They have two musicals currently in development. Adam is also an accomplished arranger, orchestrator, music director, and conductor. Adam has performed with *Skylight Music Theatre*, *Pink Umbrella Theatre*, *Minnesota Children's Theater*, *Milwaukee Opera Theatre*, *Next Act Theatre*, *Renaissance Theatre Works*, *All-In Productions*, and, at *Music Theatre of Madison*, *Indecent* and *Held*. In 2021, Adam is writing the music and lyrics for MTM's children's book *The Land of the Gifted* and working with Heidi Joosten as writer of *Micro* for the Wisconsin New Musicals Cycle. www.adamqutaishat.com



Nathan Fosbinder (Co-Director) wrote *Music Theatre of Madison's* first fully developed world premiere, *Hephaestus*, which debuted in 2019. Nathan is a graduate of the musical theatre program at the Boston Conservatory and is a graduate of the Musical Theatre Writing Program at the Tisch School at New York University. Nathan's regional writing premiere occurred in summer of 2017 with his Theatre for Young Audiences musical *The Dancing Princesses*, which was presented at Summer Theatre of New Canaan. He has appeared as a performer with Summer Theatre of New Canaan, Children's Theater of Madison, American Folklore Theatre, and the Boston Conservatory. Nathan writes short musicals that have been performed by a variety of Broadway performers during the pandemic. His song "Anyone Can Cook" was sung by Andrew Barth Feldman in the international sensation *Ratatouille: The TikTok musical*, for which he was nominated for a Drama League Award alongside his fellow writers.



Mark Wurzelbacher (Track Production for "Disgraced," Instrumentalist, Additional Music Assistance) is a composer, pianist, educator, and music director in Madison. With MTM he has music directed *Indecent* (also playing Moritz Godowski/ Accordion), *Hephaestus*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *The Puppet* (which he also co-wrote), *Arlington* (also onstage pianist), *A New Brain*, *Nightmare Alley*, and wrote for *Beyond the Ingenue-Trailblazers*. He has worked with numerous Madison-area organizations as a pianist and music director, including *Fresco Opera*, *Children's Theater of Madison*, *Forward Theater Company*, *Theatre LILA*, and *Bower City Theatre*. Mark was the Resident Music Director for *Windy City Music Theatre*, a Chicago performing and educational company producing shows for youth and all-ages casts. Mark holds Bachelor's Degrees in Organ Performance and Electrical Engineering from the University of Notre Dame and a Master's Degree in Music Theory from UW-Madison.

THE CREATIVE TEAM



Meghan Randolph (Producer) has produced all of the shows, special events, readings, and other offerings (podcast, film, concept album, and an upcoming book) in MTM's history, directed more than half of them, and appeared in several. Meghan is the company's Founder and Executive Director and excited to be celebrating 15 years of creating new and lesser-known productions in Madison. Meghan has performed on stages across North America as well as working with numerous local companies. As an arts administrator, Meghan has published research internationally, spoken at conferences through Americans for the Arts, and worked for a variety of organizations in marketing, events, fundraising, strategic planning, and day-to-day operations. Meghan graduated from Interlochen Arts Academy, holds a BFA in musical theatre from the University of Michigan, and earned an MS in Arts Administration from Drexel University. This fall, she will begin working toward a PhD in Arts Administration, with research focusing on elitism in art and how Americans place (or don't place) value on the arts within small communities. But first, she takes the stage at MTM this summer as The Woman in the world premiere of the horror musical *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Meghan sends deepest thanks to the remarkable artists who have shared their gifts with MTM this year and in the 14 that preceded it. Extra gratitude to Kristen and Adam.



Kristen Emery (Production Manager, MTM Company Manager) manages all contracts and company business as well as serving as stage manager on select MTM shows. For MTM she has stage managed *Indecent*, *Hephaestus* (workshop and full production), *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Lizzie*, *Stirking 12* and *A New Brain*. Before moving to Madison, she worked as a general manager for Cardinal Stage Company in Bloomington, IN, where she also stage managed their mainstage season. Kristen has also worked for Fresco Opera Theatre, Children's Theater of Madison, and SPCT in Madison, Legacy Theatre and the Long Wharf Theatre in Connecticut, and the Abingdon Theatre Company and OnTheSquareProductions in New York. Kristen leads her school's drama club program for 3-5th grade students in Sun Prairie's school district, where she is a 2nd grade teacher.

MTM is also supported by an Outreach Director, Technical Director, and amazing team of Artistic Associates. Learn more about them at mtmadison.com/staff.

Don't miss our other offerings this year!

[The Yellow Wallpaper: A New Horror Musical](#), August 13-15 at the Play Circle in the Memorial Union

[The Land of the Gifted](#) Fall release of a children's book with accompanying music and audio performance

[Micro](#) First reading of a new musical about microaggressions in academia, December 8, Lakeside Coffeehouse

OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

Every person who gives of their funds, time, artistry, and services is of equal meaning to Music Theatre of Madison. We embrace the model of Community-Centric Fundraising, which you can learn more about [here](#). In conjunction with our staff, artists, and audience, the following people have helped make MTM's dreams come true over the last 12 months through monetary and in-kind gifts. There are many more who supported us in previous years, and we thank everyone who has been in our corner.

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