



American Repertory Theater

LOEB DRAMA CENTER
64 brattle street,
cambridge, ma 02138

OBERON
2 arrow street
cambridge, ma 02138

617•495•2668 TEL
617•495•1705 FAX
617•547•8300 TICKETS

americanrepertorytheater.org

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Contact: Rebecca Curtiss 617.496.2000 x8841 | 617.872.8254

rebecca_curtiss@harvard.edu

OBERON Presents
Queer Heartache
Created and performed by Kit Yan
February 9 - 10 at OBERON

Cambridge, MA—OBERON, the **American Repertory Theater's (A.R.T.)** incubator for local and emerging artists, presents ***Queer Heartache*** February 9 and 10, 2018 at OBERON, 2 Arrow Street, Cambridge. Created and performed by award-winning, queer, trans, Asian-American poet from Hawaii, **Kit Yan** and directed by **Jessi Hill**, ***Queer Heartache*** returns to A.R.T. after an acclaimed run during the 2016/17 **I.D. Festival** at OBERON.

Performance dates and times:

Friday, February 9 at 7:30PM

Featuring opening performances by local spoken word artists **Black Venus**, **Chrysanthemum Tran**, and **Justice Ameer**

Saturday, January 10 at 7:30PM

Featuring opening performances by local spoken word artists **Kaleigh O'Keefe**, **Eddie Maisonet**, and **Zenaida Peterson**

Tickets from \$25. Now on sale online at americanrepertorytheater.org, by phone at 617.547.8300, or in person at the A.R.T. Ticket Services, 64 Brattle St., Cambridge.

“An intimate and fiery hour of slam poetry. Delightfully explicit. Yan’s solo performance rose to the top of a crowded field.” – *New City Stage*

Queer Heartache is **Kit Yan’s** solo slam poetry show that explores their identities, asks what queer hearts and families are made of, and interrogates the forces that constantly work to break them apart. The piece is a testament to the resilience of queer love in all its forms—between cis and trans siblings, lovers, pride parade attendees, and many more—in the face of heartbreaking barriers everywhere from the dating pool to the medical establishment. If you’ve ever had your heart broken, wondered how your pets self-identify, or wanted to tell someone your gender is none of their business, this show is for you.

“My poetry is rooted in community work,” says Yan. “That’s what’s most important to me. The energy of a live experience crates a portal for people to find points of connection within themselves. Live theater

is hard to look away from. You can click away from a TV show, but a live, human face and body holds a lot of power and magic. Heartache is queer. Healing can be, too.”

Queer Heartache was featured in the 2015 Chicago Fringe Festival where it won the Artist's Choice, Audience Choice, and Spirit of Fringe awards and the 2016 San Francisco Fringe Festival, where it won Volunteer's Choice and Best of Fringe. It received its New York premiere at the first annual 2016 Transgender Theater Festival. A print adaptation is out now through TransGenre Press (2016).

ABOUT KIT YAN

Kit Yan (Playwright/Poet/Performer/Lyricist) is an Asian-American Brooklyn based artist by the way of Hawaii. Yan's work has received recognition from Campus Pride, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and the OUTmusic Awards. They are a nationally touring artist whose poetry and performances have been reviewed by *New York Magazine*, *Bitch*, *Hyphen*, and *Curve Magazines*. Yan is currently working on a theatrical poetry investigation that has been supported by a fellowship from the Civilians R&D Group that focuses on the effect of testosterone on transgender bodies aiming to disrupt common transgender narratives that reinforce binary happiness and the “born into the wrong body” story. Yan holds a B.S. from Babson College.

ABOUT THE POETS

Friday, February 9

Black Venus is a renaissance, drawing inspiration from artists like Josephine Baker and Audre Lorde, who allowed no limits to their creative expression. They are the Assistant Director for The Theater Offensive's True Colors OUT Youth Theater Troupe, as well as a slam poetry coach for 826 Boston. As an independent and multidisciplinary artist, Black Venus' work is deeply introspective and strives to challenge normalized language and discourse around identity. They find fulfillment when using various art forms as tools for education, healing, and liberation. Black Venus is also an active community organizer, collaborating with fellow artists on programming that aims to dismantle oppression and promote healing through creative practices. For more insight into the art of Black Venus, follow them on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram, @blackv3nus, or visit their website blackv3nus.com.

Chrysanthemum Tran is a queer and transgender Vietnamese American poet, performer, and teaching artist based in Providence by way of Oklahoma City. In 2016, she became the first transfeminine finalist of the Women of the World Poetry Slam. A 2016 Rustbelt Poetry Slam Champion and 2017 FEMS Poetry Slam Champion, Chrysanthemum is a Pink Door Fellow and the current lead teaching artist for the Providence Poetry Slam youth team. Her work can be found in *The Offing*, *The Blueshift Journal*, *Muzzle Magazine*, and the *Bettering American Poetry Vol. 2* anthology.

Justice Ameer is a Black trans woman poet based in Providence, RI. Xe is a Pink Door Fellow and a three-time semifinalist at the national college slam, CUPSI. Xe is the 2017 Providence Grand Slam Champion and a 2017 FEMS Poetry Slam Champion. Xyr work is a practice in becoming unapologetic and unafraid, writing in dedication to xyr community, and xyr name. You can find xyr work on *Glass Poetry Press* and *Wusgood Mag*.

Saturday, February 10

Kaleigh O’Keefe is a transgender poet, performer, craftsperson, designer, activist, and organizer living in Dorchester, MA. They have performed everywhere from dingy basements and downtown Boston sidewalks during protests, to the Boston Pride Festival, TEDx Vail Colorado, and the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. Average wage laborer by day, and political organizer and host of the First Friday’s Youth Open Mic in Jamaica Plain by night, Kaleigh is composed mostly of earl grey and has a measuring tape in their possession at all times.

Eddie Maisonet, a born and bred Boston writer and teaching artist, is an afroboricua queer nonbinary boi who wants to manifest community healing through storytelling. He sees personal narrative as one of the best ways to build a more joyful, righteous, and playful resistance in the face of marginalization. As a teaching artist, he loves leading workshops centered on facilitating queer/trans people of color engagement with storytelling to right/write narrative. He has been published in bklyn boihood’s *Outside the XY* and recently completed an artist residency project with The Theatre Offensive called the QTPOC Mixtape Project.

Zenaida Peterson is a fire starter, a southern green witch and a queer of color who likes the wind chimes outside their window and giving rocks to people they love. Zenaida has competed in 5 collegiate and national poetry competitions placing in the top ten each time. Zenaida has been on winning teams for Voxpop and Rustbelt competitions. Most recently Zenaida was on the House Slam team, placing 3rd, and is organizing the Feminine Empowerment Movement Slam, the first slam tournament for feminine people. Zenaida believes the softness and floral of people is silenced too often. They also believe everything they hear so you shouldn’t lie to them. Zenaida unwrites the lies they’ve been given. Zenaida also unwrites violence, misogyny, racism, and their ancestors’ curses.

ABOUT OBERON PRESENTS

Since its inception, OBERON, the A.R.T.’s second stage and club theater venue, has been a destination for nightlife in Harvard Square—a thriving incubator for local and emerging artists pushing the theatrical form, and host to some of A.R.T.’s most innovative productions such as the **I.D. Festival**, **Kansas City Choir Boy**, **We’re Gonna Die**, **Ghost Quartet**, **The Shape She Makes**, **The Lily’s Revenge**, **Prometheus Bound**, and **The Donkey Show**. The **OBERON Presents** series is an extension of OBERON’s artistic vision, offering vibrant and cutting-edge work at the venue and elsewhere. The 2017/18 Season features work by **Keith A. Wallace**, **600 HIGHWAYMEN**, **Marga Gomez**, **Sara Porkalob**, **John Kelly**, **Lady Bunny**, and much more.

ABOUT THE A.R.T.:

The **American Repertory Theater** (A.R.T.) at Harvard University is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work in Cambridge and beyond. The A.R.T. was founded in 1980 by Robert Brustein, who served as Artistic Director until 2002, when he was succeeded by Robert

Woodruff. Diane Paulus began her tenure as Artistic Director in 2008. Under the leadership of Paulus as the Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director and Executive Producer Diane Borger, the A.R.T. seeks to expand the boundaries of theater by programming events that immerse audiences in transformative theatrical experiences.

Throughout its history, the A.R.T. has been honored with many distinguished awards, including the Tony Award for Best New Play for *All the Way* (2014); consecutive Tony Awards for Best Revival of a Musical for *Pippin* (2013) and *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess* (2012), both of which Paulus directed, and sixteen other Tony Awards since 2012; a Pulitzer Prize; a Jujamcyn Prize for outstanding contribution to the development of creative talent; the Tony Award for Best Regional Theater; and numerous Elliot Norton and IRNE Awards.

The A.R.T. collaborates with artists around the world to develop and create work in new ways. It is currently engaged in a number of multi-year projects, including a collaboration with Harvard's Center for the Environment that will result in the development of new work over several years. Under Paulus' leadership, the A.R.T.'s club theater, OBERON, has been an incubator for local and emerging artists and has attracted national attention for its innovative programming and business models.

As the professional theater on the campus of Harvard University, the A.R.T. catalyzes discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creative exchange among a wide range of academic departments, institutions, students, and faculty members, acting as a conduit between its community of artists and the university. The A.R.T. Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University, run in association with the Moscow Art Theatre School and the Harvard Extension School, offers graduate training in acting, dramaturgy, and voice. A.R.T. also plays a central role in Harvard's newly launched undergraduate Theater, Dance, and Media concentration, teaching courses in directing, dramatic literature, acting, voice, design, and dramaturgy.

Dedicated to making great theater accessible, the A.R.T. actively engages more than 5,000 community members and local students annually in project-based partnerships, workshops, conversations with artists, and other enrichment activities both at the theater and across the Greater Boston area. Through all of these initiatives, the A.R.T. is dedicated to producing world-class performances in which the audience is central to the theatrical experience.

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