

YEAR 1 | 2012-13







# INTRODUCTION

Jack Ferver leading a class. Photo by Andy Wainwright.

Cover: Amanda Palmer and The Grand Theft Orchestra with Carolyn Hietter '15, Anthropology. Photo by Stephanie Berger.





**N** “Artists and students coming together can create a unique artistic community.” GIDEON LESTER, DIRECTOR OF THEATER PROGRAMS

In September 2012, The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College launched a pioneering residency and commissioning program, Live Arts Bard (LAB).

As its acronym suggests, Live Arts Bard is a laboratory for new performance, spanning and transcending the traditional fields of theater, performance, dance, music, film, and visual art. Our aim is to develop a fertile and nurturing community of visiting artists and students, working side by side to generate new creative methodologies and projects.

We believe this artistic laboratory will ultimately contribute to a sustainable future for the performing arts at Bard and in colleges across the country.



# THE VISION

“The creation of LAB is a natural extension of Bard’s long-standing commitment to develop new models of education and artistic innovation.”

BOB BURSEY, SENIOR PRODUCER



While many U.S. colleges and universities offer artistic residencies, LAB is unique because it is a program of a world-class professional performing arts center (the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts) operating in equal partnership with an academic department (Bard's undergraduate program in Theater and Performance). This structure—artistic development, education, and professional presentation—completes a circle of creativity, as each of the three components enhances one another in a continuous cycle of exploration:

- Bard students work side by side with LAB visiting artists during their residencies and, in some cases, they study and participate in productions at the Fisher Center.
- LAB's resident artists benefit from the resources of the academic program and the Fisher Center, developing their own projects for presentation at Bard and elsewhere.
- Audiences gain unique insight into the creative process from work-in-progress presentations at LAB, and from the resulting finished presentations at the Fisher Center.

The multidisciplinary focus of LAB responds to a shift in the contemporary art world. We are living in a period of great artistic change and experimentation, where traditional categories of theater, performance, dance, visual arts, music, and film are being superseded with new “post-disciplinary” forms: art museums are commissioning choreographers to create work in galleries; performance artists are collaborating with sculptors and filmmakers; rock stars are writing operas; and performing arts festivals are engaging chefs as if they were theater directors, to create gastronomic performances. Tremendous energy is being unleashed in these new artistic practices, and now our schools and training programs need to catch up, not only to reflect these changes, but also to lead them.

Achieving the vision for LAB is only possible through the generous support of the Live Arts Bard Creative Council: *Harvey Berman, Steve Dawson, Jeanne Donovan Fisher, Barbara Grant, Doris Lockhart, and David Marshall*, with additional support from the *Trust for Mutual Understanding*. We are deeply grateful to these donors, and to the artists, students and audiences who inspired and informed this year's work.

LAB continues Bard's tradition of serving as a hub for interdisciplinary practice and study by creating fresh forms and collaborations. We invite you to join us, not only as audiences and supporters of this groundbreaking work, but also as participants in advancing the artistic development of those who are shaping the coming generation of creative thought and practice.

GIDEON LESTER, DIRECTOR OF THEATER PROGRAMS  
BOB BURSEY, SENIOR PRODUCER



“I try to help students discover the artist in themselves.”

JACK FEVER, CHOREOGRAPHER, WRITER, PERFORMER, AND TEACHER

# JACK FEVER

Jack Ferver is a choreographer, writer, performer, and teacher. During his LAB residency he taught semester-long undergraduate courses in Physical Theater and Performance Composition: Movement and Text. In residence, Ferver developed *All of a Sudden* (commissioned by Abrons Arts Center, New York City), and performed with the QWAN (Quality Without A Name) Company in parodied readings of two screenplays, *Notes from a Scandal* and *Black Swan*.

## *Jack Ferver on making All of A Sudden:*

This residency provided me with my “Hansel and Gretel” moment. Every artist starts with an idea—the bread crumbs, so to speak—but as I work to create a piece the idea deepens and changes, and what got me into the woods begins to evaporate. In the month I spent at LAB, *All of A Sudden* found its true expression. The opportunity to create at Bard was absolutely invaluable.

## *On teaching and learning:*

To educate is to lead out, not to feed in. I try to help students discover the artist in themselves. I’m responsible to them in a different way than I am to an audience. What I offer is the totality of my work and experience in the form of helpful amulets. Teaching and making art feed and support each other, and students are attracted to this kind of exploration. It seems that what I’m bringing to them is new, and they want to venture into uncharted territory. LAB is unique in that I am teaching here, and I’m creating a performance piece. Quite naturally these inform and inspire one another.



“Jack’s technique as a teacher and an artist is really inspiring. He encourages us to be completely honest in making physical and emotional connections, which in turn supports a freedom of expression that I find both exhilarating and thought provoking. Learning these skills and habits of mind in an academic setting, and then seeing them in practice in Jack’s choreography and performances, is incredibly freeing for me across my studies. I’m at a stage in my life where I’m trying to find my creative voice and develop an artistic process that is rigorous and productive. I came to Bard craving experiences like this.”

CORNELIA BARBOUR '13, LITERATURE



“LAB is ideally suited to this mash-up of disciplines and experiences because it blends professional practice with learning how to become an artist, and breaks down the barriers between the two.”

MILES JORIS-PEYRAFITTE '14, FILM & ELECTRONIC ARTS

# AMANDA PALMER

During her multipart LAB residency, singer/songwriter Amanda Palmer filmed a music video, developed and rehearsed her new stage show for international tour, performed *An Evening with Neil Gaiman and Amanda Palmer*, and threw “the all-time best pajama party in the history of Bard College.” More than 80 Bard students worked with Amanda as performers and crew for the video shoot and concerts.

## ***Amanda Palmer on what it means to be in residence at LAB:***

The resources here are incredible, the skills of the people involved fantastic. And it’s such a benevolent relationship—I feel like this is something money couldn’t buy. I found myself looking around and asking ‘Why do we get all this stuff?’ We know so many musicians who just need a space and a few resources to do their work. Needs and resources are so clumsily distributed between individual artists and the educational institutions that are training and preparing students.

Academia can be a terrible bubble—the more you can break that bubble the better, by inviting the outside professional world into the college community. I look at LAB from a very grateful position as one who has benefited from its creation.

“I fell in love with Amanda Palmer’s music when I was 12 or 13. I went to several Dresden Dolls concerts and they became my favorite group of all time. I was the assistant director of photography on the *Bed Song* shoot. We worked 12 to 16 hours a day for five very intense days on the video shoot. By the end, I had a much better sense of how a video and touring show are created. I feel very fortunate that this all happened before I graduated because it was one of the best experiences I’ve had at Bard.”

KYE EHRLICH '13, PHOTOGRAPHY AND STUDIO ARTS



MER







# NEIL GAIMAN



“The fact that Neil is a writer, not a teacher, had a huge impact. It was different from anything I had ever experienced. I learned more in these five days than I had during the entire semester.”

JOSEPH COTSIRILOS '14, WRITTEN ARTS

Neil Gaiman is a writer of short stories, graphic novels, film scripts, and novels. While in residence at LAB he presented a spontaneous work-in-progress reading of a new short story that filled the 800-seat Sosnoff Theater, conducted a seminar on the art and business of writing, and performed *An Evening with Neil Gaiman and Amanda Palmer*.

***Neil Gaiman on teaching and working with students:***

I've never actually taught before, although I get a lot of invitations to teach from colleges around the world. I never really wanted to do it, but I really like Bard. . . I've been impressed by how good the students are as writers. But we didn't select them all from the writing students, which I thought was important. I've been impressed by how willing they are. They're smart kids, and they're incredibly enthusiastic. I've been talking to them about short stories, novels, film, television, and graphic novels, about things going right and things going wrong, and how you can survive as a writer in the world.

“He talked about graphic novels, stories, film scripts, and libretti, which conveyed the idea that you don't have to be locked in to one genre. He says ‘art is never completed, it's abandoned’—this is such a freeing thought, relaxing rather than fighting your way to the end. I think he's a natural teacher.”

CHIARA HARRISON LAMBE '15, ART HISTORY AND WRITTEN ARTS



Neil Gaiman leading a seminar.

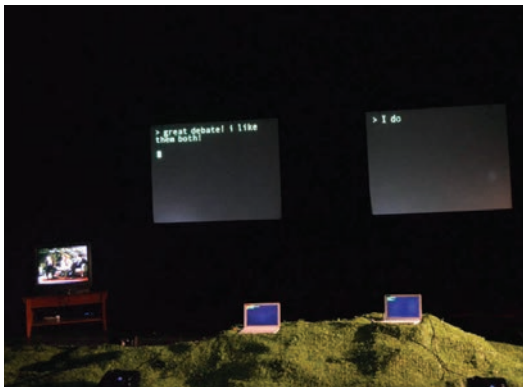
“This way of working is something I could explore and pursue in future projects after Bard. I feel I have the tools I need to generate work and performance for the rest of my life.”

LAYLA WOLFGANG '13, MATHEMATICS AND THEATER & PERFORMANCE

# ANNIE DORSE

“Annie was very engaged in our creative work. In the Democracy in America class we explored the role art plays in society. There were 12 of us in the class, and we worked in teams to create a series of performance installations. In our group we created a piece from ideas we collected in submission boxes situated around the campus. The selection was random, and all the pieces happened on the same day and time across the campus. We all wrote, directed, and performed, and I found this very satisfying. I don't want to pigeonhole myself as an artist. Exploring the life of the mind and working as a performer shouldn't be mutually exclusive.”

HANNAH MITCHELL '13, THEATER & PERFORMANCE



Left: *Hello Hi There* in performance. Right: Annie Dorse with Maria Sachiko Cecire, assistant professor of literature.



Annie Dorsen creates theater, film, dance, and digital performance pieces. While in residence at LAB she presented *Hello Hi There*, a performance for two computer chatbots; developed *A Piece of Work* with actor Scott Shepherd (commissioned by On The Boards, Seattle); and taught two undergraduate courses, Democracy in America: Populist Performance in Theory and Practice, and Chance in Performance.

**Annie Dorsen on her role as an artist and teacher:**

My residency at LAB included the development of my latest project, *A Piece of Work*, and a performance of an older piece, *Hello Hi There*. For the last few years, I've been interested in algorithms and how they can be deployed in performance. My next work will most likely involve machine learning in relationship to unsolvable problems, for example, the "Halting Problem," Alan Turing's proof that demonstrates the impossibility of knowing when or if a particular computer process will come to an end. I find that to be a poetic thought. My intention as an artist is to provoke new ways of thinking for the audience, and that's how I approach teaching too. The classes and my residency were fully integrated, and fed each other. I found my students at Bard to be incredibly engaged and alert, and I adored the experience of mentoring them.

N





## Performance Residencies

*LAB included three resident artists who focused primarily on the creation of new work.*

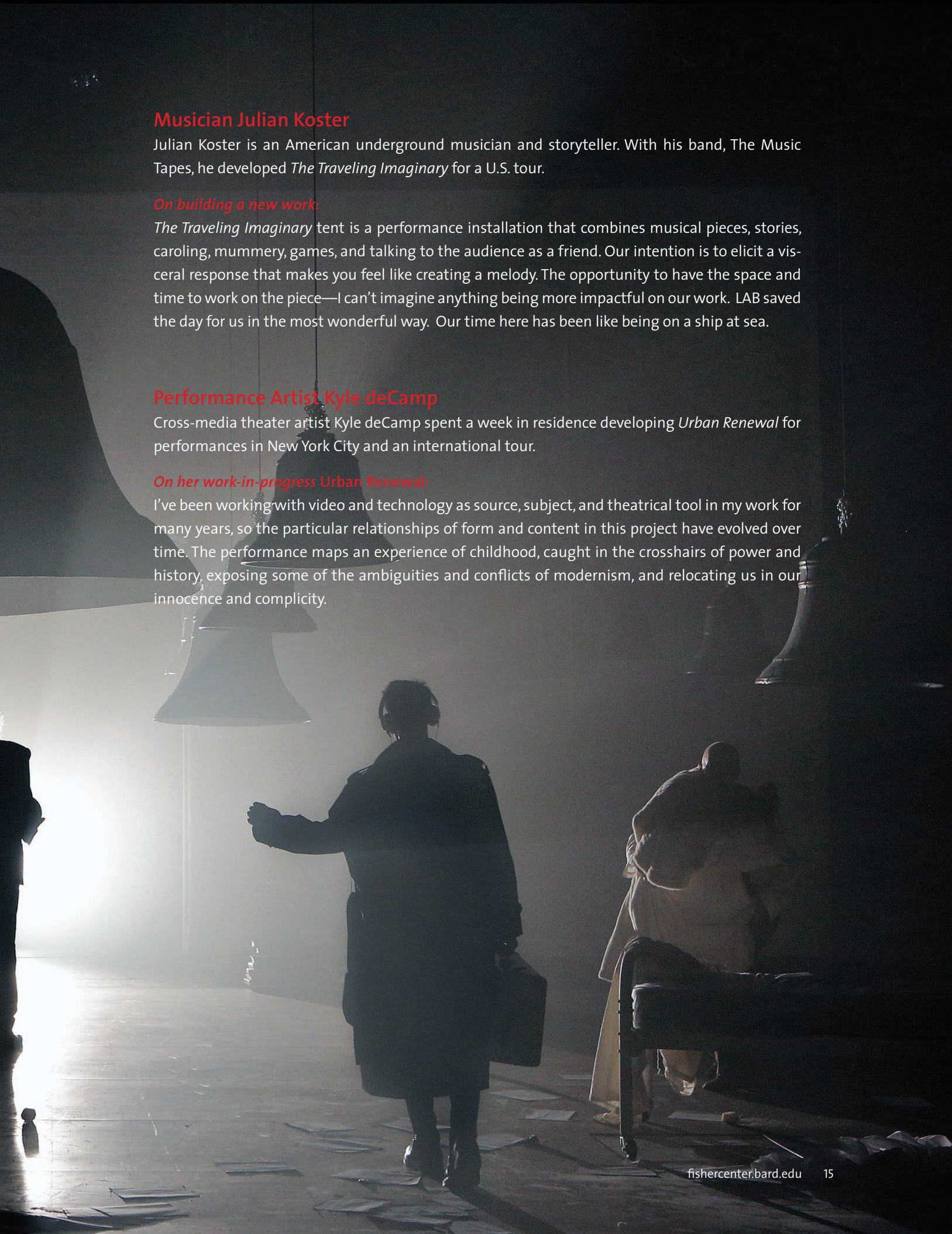
### Director János Szász

Hungarian stage and film director János Szász made two visits to campus to plan a new adaptation of Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita* for premiere in the 2013 SummerScape festival. Szász participated in Theater & Performance Program classes and auditioned students to perform in the project.

#### *On working with students:*

I am a director who works with an open mind in that my work is informed by the actors and students I work with. At the same time, I am an educator through this exchange with actors and young people. It's a very practical way of working, and Bard is an exceptional place for creativity.





## Musician Julian Koster

Julian Koster is an American underground musician and storyteller. With his band, The Music Tapes, he developed *The Traveling Imaginary* for a U.S. tour.

### *On building a new work:*

*The Traveling Imaginary* tent is a performance installation that combines musical pieces, stories, caroling, mummery, games, and talking to the audience as a friend. Our intention is to elicit a visceral response that makes you feel like creating a melody. The opportunity to have the space and time to work on the piece—I can't imagine anything being more impactful on our work. LAB saved the day for us in the most wonderful way. Our time here has been like being on a ship at sea.

## Performance Artist Kyle deCamp

Cross-media theater artist Kyle deCamp spent a week in residence developing *Urban Renewal* for performances in New York City and an international tour.

### *On her work-in-progress Urban Renewal:*

I've been working with video and technology as source, subject, and theatrical tool in my work for many years, so the particular relationships of form and content in this project have evolved over time. The performance maps an experience of childhood, caught in the crosshairs of power and history, exposing some of the ambiguities and conflicts of modernism, and relocating us in our innocence and complicity.





## **Bard College and The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts**

Bard College has distinguished itself as a leader in the field of liberal arts and sciences for more than 150 years by providing a first-rate undergraduate education for its students. The College is known for its pioneering ideas in education, its passionate commitment to the highest standards of artistic inquiry and practice, and for its vigorous advocacy of liberty, citizenship, individual dignity, and tolerance of differences.

The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, designed by architect Frank Gehry, is the most ambitious capital project in Bard's history, and illustrates the commitment of the College to bringing performing artists of the first rank to perform and work with its students, faculty, staff, and the public. The Center's programs in opera, dance, theater, music, film, and cabaret, along with its world-class facilities, provide an outstanding venue in which to create and learn.

Together these institutions provide an exceptional environment for resident artists to create original pieces, work in close collaboration with faculty and staff, and inspire students' thinking and practice.





## Year Two Preview 2013–14

Performance and visual artist **John Kelly** will teach two courses while he develops a “cross platform” memoir drawing from 32 years of his handwritten journals, reflecting the passage from analog to digital, the creative golden age of the 1980s, and the devastation of the AIDS pandemic.

Choreographer **Sarah Michelson** will construct a new commissioned work created through a series of workshops with Bard students and professional dancers. The project will be developed over four years and premiere at the Bard SummerScape festival in 2017.


The New York–based art and performance group **Nature Theater of Oklahoma** is commissioned to develop Episode 7 of its acclaimed *Life and Times* series. A full-length film envisioned as a “musical in nature,” the work will be shot on location at Bard. Company member **Anne Gridley ’02** will teach a course in spring 2014.

Absurdist theater-maker and performer **Geoff Sobelle** will teach three courses and develop a new touring version of *Elephant Room*, which will premiere at the Fisher Center this winter.

Actor, playwright, and teaching artist **Nilaja Sun** will teach a course in solo performance, perform her Obie Award–winning solo piece *No Child...*, and work with **Ron Russell** (Epic Theater Ensemble) to develop a new theater work, *Outside/In*.

In collaboration with Bard’s Hannah Arendt Center for Politics and Humanities, theater and opera director **Robert Woodruff** will teach two courses and develop an original production investigating Arendt’s writing.





### *Supporters*

The 2012–13 LAB projects were made possible by the generous support of the Live Arts Bard Creative Council: Harvey Berman, Steve Dawson, Jeanne Donovan Fisher, Barbara Grant, Doris Lockhart, and David Marshall. Additional support was provided by The Trust for Mutual Understanding.

### *Live Arts Bard Program Management*

Gideon Lester, Director of Theater Programs

Bob Bursey, Senior Producer

Vin Roca, Production Manager

Matt Waldron, Production Coordinator, Dance & Theater

Bob Bangiola, General Manager,  
Dance and Theater & Performance Programs

Joanna Szu, Marketing Associate

Marla Walker, Executive Assistant

### *Publication Credits*

Richard Bell, Editor

Karen Spencer, Designer

Printed by Quality Printing, Massachusetts

The Richard B. Fisher Center  
for the Performing Arts at Bard College

845-758-7900

[fishercenter.bard.edu](http://fishercenter.bard.edu)

©2013 Bard College. All rights reserved.





Musician Julian Koster and the Music Tapes' *The Traveling Imaginary*. Photo by Andy Wainwright.



Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York