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For Immediate Release

Contact: Steven Padla / [press@artidea.org](mailto:press@artidea.org)

**THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS & IDEAS  
ANNOUNCES  
ARTISTIC PROGRAMMING**

**COMPAGNIA DE' COLOMBARI: *MORE OR LESS I AM***

**BYRON AU YONG & AARON JAFFERIS: *ACTIVIST SONGBOOK***

**KEIGWIN + COMPANY: *LET'S MAKE A DANCE***

The artistic programming of the 2020 **International Festival of Arts & Ideas** is underway and will continue through the month of June. The lineup includes ***More or Less I Am***, created by **Compagnia de' Colombari**; ***Activist Songbook***, created by composer **Byron Au Yong** and lyricist **Aaron Jafferis**; and ***Let's Make a Dance***, created by **Keigwin + Company**.

"We are thrilled that the creative teams behind all three of these projects, originally devised as live performances for this year's Festival, have reconceived them for our digital stages this summer," said Festival Co-Directors **Liz Fisher** and **Tom Griggs**. "Each of them have discovered unique and delightful ways to share their work that Festival audiences here in New Haven, and around the world, will cherish."

All artistic programming is presented free of charge.

**MORE OR LESS I AM**

Inspired by Walt Whitman's revolutionary poem "Song of Myself," the international collective Compagnia de' Colombari combines fiddle and flute, dance, sea shanties, opera, and poetry in a declaration of American independence and diversity that invokes the spirit of Whitman's

abiding masterpiece. Audiences consistently name the company's 2016 production, *The Merchant of Venice*, as one of their favorite Festival performances of the last 25 years.

***More or Less I Am*** will be presented in a series of four videos published on the Festival's website. The first episode, "Journey," will be released on May 22. The schedule for the subsequent episodes is "The City," June 5; "Nature + Democracy," June 19; and "Gratitude," June 26.

## **ACTIVIST SONGBOOK**

*Activist Songbook* is an ongoing performance project creating 53 new songs and raps to counteract hate and energize movements. Composer Byron Au Yong and lyricist Aaron Jafferis interview Asian American activists, immigrants and refugees, asking: What are the sounds your movement needs that do not yet exist? How can we work together to create these songs?

*Activist Songbook* will be composed of an "Illuminated Manuscript" that contains all 53 songs written over the course of the project, workshops with New Haven songwriters to compose "the 53rd song" in the series, Virtual Choir performances of songs from the repertoire, and a small series of "live engagements."

The interplay and interaction of these components are geared to connect the New Haven activist community with the larger national conversations surrounding activism, as well as building a platform for awareness of both the work and the issues in play.

### **Virtual Choir**

*Activist Songbook* Virtual Choirs, made up of musicians and non-musicians, record songs from the songbook repertoire and perform together from the safety of their own homes, led by Activist Songbook Chorus Director Stephanie Tubiolo (Associate Director of Choirs at Princeton University).

A total of five videos will be created, and singers of every level are welcome. With a single Zoom rehearsal under their belts, performers use guide tracks to record their parts separately, singing along and improvising. The first Virtual Choir video, "We Will Break Free," is published on the Festival website, where more information and a registration link are also available:

<https://www.artidea.org/activistsongbook>

*Activist Songbook* is funded in part by the New England States Touring program of the New England Foundation for the Arts, made possible with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts Regional Touring Program and the six New England state arts agencies.

## **LET'S MAKE A DANCE**

Keigwin + Company's inclusive *Let's Make a Dance* workshop is open to all ages and skill levels. The company's artistic director—choreographer and award-winning dancer Larry Keigwin—invites anyone with “undiscovered talent and a sense of humor” to join the workshop, he says. “Come move with us and play.”

Keigwin & Company will open the virtual door to their creative process and guide participants through a choreographic process that uses games, creative assignments, and guided improvisation to build mini dances. The goal is to harness the group's collective enthusiasm for dance in a playful environment to enable everyone to discover their bodies' singular imagination and the performer within. The result will be a learning experience that highlights the joy of the creative process and emphasizes that dance is a journey taken with others.

A total of six *Let's Make a Dance* workshops will be held, each open to 12 participants. Workshops began over the weekend and continue on Wednesday, May 20 at 7PM; Wednesday, May 27 at 7PM; and Saturday, May 30 at 1PM.

*Let's Make a Dance* is presented by Avangrid Foundation in partnership with United Illuminating and Southern CT Gas; with additional support from Seabury At Home, the National Endowment for the Arts, and The Jean Handley Fund.

## **MORE ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS & IDEAS**

The International Festival of Arts & Ideas celebrates and builds community, engages with vital issues, and promotes the arts. Each year, we highlight the City's diverse and culturally rich community with events featuring world-class artists, thinkers, and leaders. The Festival's additional programs include the annual Visionary Leadership Award and educational opportunities like the High School Fellowship Program. The Festival was established in 1996 by Anne Calabresi, Jean M. Handley, and Roslyn Meyer, who envisioned an annual celebration in New Haven—a city steeped in a rich array of cultural and educational traditions—distinguished from other arts festivals by its fusion of the arts with events centered on sharing ideas.

The Festival is presented with major support from Yale University, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Connecticut Office of the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts with additional support from The City of New Haven, KeyBank, The Whitney Center, Yale New Haven Health, the Avangrid Foundation in partnership with United Illuminating and Southern CT Gas, Connecticut Humanities, a non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and our generous community of individual supporters.

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