



# Yesterday Tomorrow

an algorithmic concert  
by Annie Dorsen

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## Yesterday Tomorrow

Yesterday Tomorrow is a new kind of musical, a collaboration between human artists and evolutionary algorithms. In this work, a chorus of live singers are fed a real-time algorithmically-generated score to create an environmental concert of song, machines, gestures, light and space. Inspired by a kind of artificial intelligence known as evolutionary computation, Yesterday Tomorrow gives a unique experience of the complexity and unpredictability of the present tense contrasted with the known past and the imagined future.

Beginning with the Beatles' "Yesterday," algorithms slowly transform that song into "Tomorrow" from the musical Annie. Three singers receive the computer-generated music and lyrics both aurally and visually, and follow a movement score, also produced algorithmically, that moves them from a starting to an ending position. Each night, the spatial and musical path from the past to the future is different; neither the singers, the creative team, nor the audience knows where we will end up.

The singers onstage and the computer generated melodies and lyrics blend to create a disorienting series of alternations: between human and machine, between sound and sense, between the recognizable and the utterly unfamiliar. Finally and eventually, it's a piece about the passage of time, about progress and regress, about the loss of one world and the optimistic creation of another.

### Artistic Team

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Concept/Direction       | Annie Dorsen   |
| Music Director          | Joanna Bailie  |
| Computer Programming    | Pierre Godard  |
| Sound Design            | Greg Beller  |
| Additional Sound Design | Ian Douglas-Moore                                    |
| Video Systems Design    | Ryan Holsopple                                       |
| Lighting Design         | Bruno Pocheron and Ruth Waldeyer                     |
| Technical Direction     | Ruth Waldeyer  |
| Management / Production | Natasha Katerinopoulos                               |
| Performers              | Hai-Ting Chinn, Jeffrey Gavett, and Natalie Raybould |

### Co-Producers and Funders

Yesterday Tomorrow is a co-production of Holland Festival; Black Box Teater (Oslo); Performance Space 122 (New York); La Villette – Résidences d'Artistes 2015; TANDEM – Scène nationale Arras Douai; Théâtre de Gennevilliers with Festival d'Automne à Paris; Maillon, Théâtre de Strasbourg – Scène européenne; and Théâtre Garonne, Scène européenne, Toulouse. Made possible, in part, by The MAP Fund, with the assistance of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. Additional support provided through fiscal sponsorship and a residency at Mount Tremper Arts; and a residency at Abrons Arts Center.

## Performance History

|  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA                       | September 15-17, 2022   |
| Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN                     | July 21-23, 2022        |
| Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH               | July 16, 2022           |
| MaerzMusik, Berliner Festspiele, Berlin, DE            | March 12, 2016          |
| PS122 COIL Festival, New York, NY                      | January 13-16, 2016     |
| Théâtre de Gennevilliers/Festival d'Automne, Paris, FR | December 6-8, 2015      |
| Théâtre Garonne, Toulouse, FR,                         | November 27-28, 2015    |
| National Theater of Croatia, HR                        | November 22, 2015       |
| TANDEM – Arras Théâtre, Arras, FR                      | November 16-17, 2015    |
| Le Maillon, Strasbourg, FR                             | November 3-4, 2015      |
| Black Box Teater, Oslo, NO                             | September 18-19, 2015   |
| Holland Festival, Amsterdam, NL                        | June 4, 2015 (premiere) |

## Press

“...a haunting and strangely beautiful musical theater piece that is as simple in its emotional appeal as it is complex in its conception and execution.”

– Charles Isherwood, *New York Times*

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/15/theater/review-yesterday-tomorrow-a-meeting-of-songs-about-time.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/15/theater/review-yesterday-tomorrow-a-meeting-of-songs-about-time.html?_r=0)

“Through complex musical territories, Annie Dorsen takes us on a daring concert...sometimes harsh, sometimes cheerful, the random and technological dimensions of which provoke disturbing reflections on our condition. And our freedom.”

– Manuel Piolat Soleymat, *La Terrasse*

<http://www.journal-laterrasse.fr/yesterday-tomorrow-youarenowhere/>

“Annie Dorsen has created a brilliant work in which popular culture crosses the elite, and where performance is support for an entirely pertinent interaction between the human and the digital. Run to it tonight.”

– Amelie Blaustein Niddam, *Toute La Culture*

<http://toutelaculture.com/spectacles/performance/festival-dautomne-yesterday-tomorrow-les-aleatoires-dannie-dorsen/>

“Annie Dorsen provides a space where one can fully feel and finally enjoy the present moment in all it has to offer...A meeting of Broadway, experimental music and contemporary theater, Yesterday Tomorrow is a work that does not revolutionize the contemporary scene but opens a huge door for possibilities of a resurgence of theatrical creation. In its short format, this proposition is both accessible and sharp in its implementation and its problematics.”

– Pierre-Alexandre Culo, *Théâtre-Actu*

<http://theatreactu.com/?p=1614>

## Video

Full-length video: <https://vimeo.com/161839368>

password: yesto

Filmed in New York, NY

Presented by Performance Space 122's COIL Festival, at La MaMa Etc.

January 13-16, 2016

## Annie Dorsen Short Biography

Annie Dorsen is a director and writer whose works explore the intersection of algorithms and live performance. Her most recent project, INFINITE SUN (2019), is an algorithmic sound installation commissioned by the Sharjah Biennial 14. Previous performance projects, including THE SLOW ROOM (2018), THE GREAT OUTDOORS (2017), YESTERDAY TOMORROW (2015), A PIECE OF WORK (2013) and HELLO HI THERE (2010), have been widely presented in the US and internationally. Some of the venues where her work has been seen include Performance Space New York (formerly PS122), Le Festival d'Automne de Paris, The Holland Festival, BAM's Next Wave Festival, New York Live Arts, Kampnagel Summer Festival, Kaaaitheater, and The New York Film Festival's "Views from the Avant-garde" series, along with many others. The script for A PIECE OF WORK was published by Ugly Duckling Presse, and she has contributed essays for The Drama Review (TDR), Theatre Magazine, Etcetera, Frakcija, and Performing Arts Journal (PAJ). She has collaborated frequently with musicians and choreographers, including Anne Juren, Ethel, Questlove/The Roots, DD Dorvillier, and Sébastien Roux. She is the co-creator of the 2008 Broadway musical Passing Strange, which she also directed. In addition to awards for Passing Strange, Dorsen received a 2019 MacArthur Fellowship, a 2018 Guggenheim Fellowship, the 2018 Spalding Gray Award, a 2016 Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant to Artists Award and the 2014 Herb Alpert Award for the Arts in Theatre.