

**BARD SUMMERSCAPE 2021 STATEMENT**  
**GIDEON LESTER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

April 29, 2021

From their origins in a tent on the Bard College campus, SummerScape and the Bard Music Festival have long been an incubator for artist-centered exploration, programs that are far from conventional, and adventurous audiences ready to engage.

Now after the hiatus of 2020, the festivals are returning with renewal, hope, and sublime artistry at their core, true to the values that have guided them for decades, but re-tuned for the unique circumstances and conditions of the current year.

These extraordinary times call for an extraordinary festival, to bring us back together safely and joyfully. Every aspect of the program has been reconsidered and reimagined, with the health and safety of our audiences, artists, and staff, as paramount, to create a SummerScape like no other.

We are thrilled and humbled to announce this return to live performance in service of the exchange between our cherished community of artists and audiences. SummerScape 2021 is also an opportunity for us to welcome back many designers, technicians, and staff who work tirelessly to create a singular experience both on and off our stages.

This summer's festival includes new works by artists who have deep and evolving relationships with the Fisher Center. We are also thrilled to be presenting several artists for the first time, including some we've collaborated with over the past year as part of our continuing journey toward becoming a more equitable and inclusive organization. After the uncertainty and isolation of the pandemic, the coming months will offer particularly joyous and meaningful opportunities for all these artists to return to rehearse and perform again, and invite audiences to join us and them on voyages of creation and discovery.

The program opens with the Fisher Center's first large-scale outdoor dance commission taking place on the spectacular grounds of Montgomery Place, with the splendor of the Hudson Valley as a backdrop. The Fisher Center's Choreographer-in-Residence, Pam Tanowitz, and composer Jessie Montgomery will explore the history and topography of the site as they create this new work.

# FISHER CENTER

The festival continues with a series of concerts on a new stage at Montgomery Place, which include a newly commissioned concert by SummerScape favorite Justin Vivian Bond, a concert version of an American musical classic by Daniel Fish performed by female and non-binary voices, and a two-week residency curated by musician and impresario Michael Mwenso, culminating in a series of concerts centering the joy, hope, healing, and uplifting spirits of Black roots music.

The festival also includes an imaginative new production of Chausson's King Arthur, which will be both streamed and performed live, and culminates in the first Bard Music Festival devoted to the life and work of a female composer, Nadia Boulanger.

In keeping with the Fisher Center's dedication to innovation and exploration, this is in every sense a summer of firsts.

## Bard