

FR SEP 6, 2019, AT 7:30PM

# KAKI KING: DATA NOT FOUND

— NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE —

**ELLNORA** THE GUITAR FESTIVAL



## Kaki King DATA NOT FOUND

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Created by and starring Kaki King  
Annie Dorsen, director  
Greg Kastelman and Vickie Starr, producers  
Max Bernstein, production designer/video designer  
Bobby McElver, sound designer  
Ryan Seelig, lighting designer  
Chloe Alexandra Thompson, associate sound designer  
Kaki King and Annie Dorsen, text  
Anne Washburn, additional wordwork  
Giorgia Lupi, data visualization  
threeASFOUR, wardrobe

It started with health care. Or more precisely, with Kaki's three-year-old daughter, who woke up one morning with blood in her mouth. That morning, sitting in the ER room, a blood test confirmed she had Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura—or ITP. "The following weeks became a terrifying spree of platelet transfusions, courses of steroids, blood tests, and abject terror as we watched her platelet levels rise and fall," Kaki recalls.

In an effort to lend emotional support, Kaki's friend, data designer and visual artist Giorgia Lupi—with whom Kaki had just completed a multi-sensory collaboration, along with designer and technologist John Maeda—suggested a new collaboration. "The doctor's directive was for us to watch her skin for any significant changes," Kaki explains, "so I began to write down what I was seeing on Cooper's skin, what activities we did that day, what treatments she had and what her readings were."

At Lupi's urging, she also kept detailed notes on how she was feeling at various times during each day. The two then applied their combined arts to "map" this data into music and illustration, resulting in the groundbreaking work "Bruises," originally presented as a stand-alone piece in 2018 and currently featured in the Smithsonian Design Museum's *Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial* (on view through January 20, 2020), in addition to being featured in *DATA NOT FOUND*.

Then there was the sand . . . Energized by her newly sparked curiosity around data, combined with her continued interest in multimedia and pushing the boundaries of her primary instrument—the guitar—Kaki headed to Abu Dhabi to embark

on the creation of *DATA NOT FOUND*. Struck by the vast magnificence of the landscape and surrounded, literally, by sand, she realized it was the perfect metaphor for data. Sand is one of the most abundant building materials in the world, used in concrete to build skyscrapers and endless stretches of road. It's also the basis for much of modern technology, the most common component in sand being silicon. Pulling silicon from sand is the cheapest and easiest way to get an efficient silicon chip, a crucial component in microelectronics and computer chips, making it the foundation of much of our daily lives. In fact, like data, sand is a backbone of human civilization.

*DATA NOT FOUND* is an immersive, audiovisual journey exploring a broad range of contemporary issues including artificial intelligence, the natural world, "big data," and personal empowerment.

**The more sand that has escaped  
from the hourglass of our life, the  
clearer we should see through it.**

—JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

*DATA NOT FOUND* is a joint co-commission made possible by the The Arts Center at New York University Abu Dhabi; International Festival of Arts & Ideas, New Haven, Connecticut; the Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech; ARTS@TECH at Georgia Tech; Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and Ovation Guitars. Developmental support provided by Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA). Technical support provided by Potion Design.

Special thanks to Bill Bragin, Madison Cairo, Chad Herzog, Diane Eber, John Maeda, Giorgia Lupi

## PROFILES

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Hailed by *Rolling Stone* as "a genre unto herself," Brooklyn-based composer and guitarist **Kaki King** is considered one of the world's greatest living guitarists, known both for her technical mastery and for her constant quest to push the boundaries of the instrument. In 2015, Kaki launched *The Neck is a Bridge to the Body*, a groundbreaking multimedia performance that used her guitar as a projection



screen and an ontological tabula rasa in a creation myth unlike any other, exploring the genesis of the instrument and her relationship to it as well as her own origin story. The show toured extensively throughout North America, Europe, Australia, Turkey, Japan, and Brazil, marking her first foray into multimedia and experimental theatre.

King has released nine albums over the past 14 years and toured extensively all over the world, presenting her work in such prestigious arts centers as the Kennedy Center, the Museum of Modern Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Met, and Smithsonian Design Museum. She has created music for numerous film and TV soundtracks, including *August Rush* and Sean Penn's *Into the Wild*, for which she received a Golden Globe nomination for Best Original Score. In addition to her solo work, she has performed with symphonies and chamber ensembles, including the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and string quartet Ethel, and recorded an album in collaboration with the Porta Girevole Chamber Orchestra commissioned by the Berklee College of Music. Most recently, she produced Treya Lam's debut album *Good News*, which she released on her own label, Short Stuff Records.

**Annie Dorsen (director)** is a writer and director working across the fields of theatre, film, dance, and algorithmic performance. Her most recent project, *Infinite Sun* (2019), premiered at the Sharjah Biennial 14. Previous projects, including *The Great Outdoors* (2017), *Yesterday Tomorrow* (2015), *A Piece of Work* (2013), and *Hello Hi There* (2010), have been widely presented in the United States and internationally. The script of *A Piece of Work* was published by Ugly Duckling Presse, and she has contributed essays for *The Drama Review*, *Theatre Magazine*, *Etcetera*, *Frakcija*, and *Performing Arts Journal* (PAJ). 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 2018 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2016 Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant to Artists Award, the 2014 Herb Alpert Award for the Arts in Theater, and a 2008 OBIE Award. She is a Visiting Professor in Theater and Performance Studies at the University of Chicago.

**Max Bernstein** was born in Buffalo, New York, where he received his BA in media study with a concentration in film and video production from the University at Buffalo. Bernstein also received an MFA in film production and studio art from the University of Colorado Boulder. He has worked and toured as a technical artist with the Wooster Group and as a video and sound designer with Michelle Ellsworth, Kaki King, Cindy Kleine, Aynsley Vandenbroucke, Sam Kim, Morgan Gould, and Ondine Geary. In addition, he is one half of the piano-harp duo Outlier, a founding member of media art performance group the Flinching Eye Collective, a video artist for Friends of the Tank, drummer and video designer for the band Eupana, composer and sound engineer at Tribal Studio, a lifelong multi-instrumentalist, and a scuba diver. Bernstein is currently a lecturer for the Department of Film, Dance, and Theater in the Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts.

**Bobby McElver (sound designer and composer)** works with technology, spatial audio, and music in the performing arts. He specializes in the intersection of performers and technology, designing responsive and interactive systems for experimental theatre and dance. He has recently been in residency at EMPAC, developing spatial audio content and presenting on techniques using Wave Field Synthesis. He was a company member of The Wooster Group (2011-2016). Other collaborators include Andrew Schneider, Faye Driscoll, NYC Players, Half Straddle, Young Jean Lee, Palissimo, and Erin Markey. McElver was nominated for a 2015 BESSIE. [bobbymcelver.com](http://bobbymcelver.com)

**Ryan Seelig** is a lighting and production designer, theater artist, and production manager based in New York City. He is a 2009 honors graduate of Fordham University who has been working freelance in the entertainment industry for the past decade. Seelig has worked with renowned theatre companies The Wooster Group, Young Jean Lee's Theater Company, Elevator Repair Service, Ensemble Studio Theatre, and Abrons Arts Center and frequently collaborates with auteurs Michelle Ellsworth, Becca Blackwell, Morgan Gould, and more. Upcoming projects include lighting design for the James Sprang's "Turning Towards a Radical Listening" and Michelle Ellsworth's "Post Verbal Social Network." See his work at [www.ryanseelig.com](http://www.ryanseelig.com).

**Chloe Alexandra Thompson** is a sound designer and artist who composes works of sonic minimalism using audio programming software and acoustic instruments. Focused on live performance and spatial intervention, Thompson engineers multi-channel interplays of psycho-acoustics, live processed field recordings, and isolated frequencies. Fascinated by digital technology's seemingly endless possibilities for experimentation, Thompson routinely collaborates with other artists to explore new avenues for electronic creation. Thompson was formerly the Director of Technology at Portland media arts center Open Signal; presently, she is working with artists to create atmospheric environments through manipulation of source and space. She is working with wave field synthesis as an associate of sound designer Bobby McElver.

**Giorgia Lupi** is an information designer, artist, and author and a partner at Pentagram in New York City. Prior to joining Pentagram, she was a co-founder of Accurat, a data-driven design firm with offices in Milan and New York where she was the Creative Director. She is co-author of *Dear Data*, an aspirational, hand-drawn data visualization book available in bookshops in the United States (Princeton Architectural Press) and the United Kingdom (Penguin Random House UK). Her work is part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art and of the permanent collection of the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. She was named one of *Fast Company's* 100 Most Creative People in Business in 2018, and is a Director's Fellow at the MIT Media Lab. She is also a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on New Metrics.

The plays of **Anne Washburn** (additional wordwork) include 10 out of 12, *Antlia Pneumatica*, *Apparition*, *The Communist Dracula Pageant*, *A Devil At Noon*, *I Have Loved Strangers*, *The Internationalist*, *The Ladies*, *Little Bunny Foo Foo*, *Mr. Burns*, *Shipwreck*, *The Small*, an adaption of *The Twilight Zone*, and transadaptations of Euripides' *Orestes* and *Iphigenia*

*in Aulis*. Her work has premiered with 13P, Actors Theater of Louisville, The Almeida, American Repertory Theatre, Cherry Lane Theatre, Classic Stage Company, Clubbed Thumb, The Civilians, Dixon Place, Ensemble Studio Theater, The Folger, Playwrights Horizons, Soho Rep, Two River Theater Company, Vineyard Theater, and Woolly Mammoth. Washburn's honors include a Guggenheim, a Whiting, an Alpert Award, a PEN/Laura Pels award for artist in mid-career, and residencies at MacDowell and Yaddo.

**ThreeASFOUR** was founded in 2005 by Gabriel Asfour (b. Lebanon), Angela Donhauser (b. USSR) and Adi Gil (b. Israel) and the collective has built a legacy of fusing cutting-edge technology with traditional craftsmanship to create clothing at the intersection of fashion and art. Drawing their core aesthetic from the universal languages of sacred geometry, threeASFOUR is devoted to the creative exploration of themes of consciousness and cultural coexistence. In 2015, threeASFOUR were the recipients of the Cooper Hewitt Museum's National Design Award. Their work has been in more than two dozen exhibitions including The Met Costume Institute; Museum of Fine Art, Boston; Brooklyn Museum; Jewish Museum; Museum at FIT; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; The Garage, Moscow; and the Museo Nacional Bellas Artes de Cuba. threeASFOUR have collaborated with numerous artists and musicians, including Björk (2011), Yoko Ono (2009) and Matthew Barney (2007) as well as brands such as the GAP (2007) and Kate Spade (2005).

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