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## Spinning

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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**World Premiere!**  
**Julia Wolfe | Maya Beiser |**  
**Laurie Olander**

# *Spinning*



Photo by ioulex

**May 10–13, 2018**  
Alexander Kasser Theater

**Arts + Cultural  
Programming**



**MONTCLAIR STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President  
Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts  
Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts + Cultural Programming

**World Premiere!**

**Julia Wolfe | Maya Beiser |  
Laurie Olinder**

# ***Spinning***

Conceived by **Julia Wolfe** and **Maya Beiser**  
Music and Text by **Julia Wolfe**  
Projection Art and Design by **Laurie Olinder**

Sound Designer **Dave Cook**  
Lighting Designer **Aaron Copp**  
Choreographer **Netta Yerushalmy**  
Projection Programmer **Simon Harding**  
Associate Lighting Designer **Jennifer Hill**  
Costume Designer **Diego Montoya**

Produced by **Islandia Music & Jensen Artists**  
Production Manager **Chris Roberts**

**Maya Beiser**, cello  
**Lavena Johanson**, cello  
**Melody Giron**, cello

Additional footage for *Spinning* by Bill Morrison. Special thanks to Melissa Weaver, Alon Koppel, Adam Cuthbert, and Tim Thomas; Thingborg Wool Center, Selfoss, Iceland; New York State Wool and Sheep Festival; and Rita Bobry and Penny Weingarten of Downtown Yarns.

Maya, Julie, and Laurie would like to personally thank Jed Wheeler for his vision and leadership, and Christina Jensen for her unwavering dedication to bringing *Spinning* to fruition.

*Spinning* was commissioned by Peak Performances at Montclair State University and made possible by The MAP Fund, which is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more about how National Endowment for the Arts grants impact individuals and communities, visit [www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov).

Funded in part by The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc.

**The Aaron Copland Fund for Music** 

Duration: 60 minutes, no intermission.

In consideration of both audiences and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted in the theater.

## Program Notes

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Spinning is as old as time. The industrious spider spins her web in an intricate process of pulling silk from a gland and casting out lines. Humans use tools—spindles, wheels, industrial machines. Our piece *Spinning* embraces the art of spinning with sound, song, and imagery. From ethereal lines to dense and driving mechanisms, we reflect on the engineering and poetic process of creating thread. Parallels between strung bows, cello strings, spinning patterns, frenetic bobbins, texture, textiles, and busy hands combine with song to propel us.

We first met in graduate school at Yale, and then went on to collaborate in the formation of the amplified touring band Bang on a Can All-Stars, which emerged out of the Bang on a Can Festival in the early 1990s. *Spinning*, an evening-length work,

marks our first in-depth collaboration. We have teamed up with visual/projection artist Laurie Olinder to create an immersive visual scape for this world premiere.

We want to thank the choreographer Netta Yerushalmy, sound designer Dave Cook, lighting designer Aaron Copp, and cellists Lavena Johanson and Melody Giron for their invaluable contribution to this work.

—*Julia Wolfe and Maya Beiser*

## About the Artists

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### Performers

**Maya Beiser** (Concept/Cello) is an avant-garde cellist and multifaceted artist who defies categories. She has captivated audiences worldwide with her “consummate virtuosity” (*The New York Times*) and relentless quest to redefine her instrument’s boundaries. *The Boston Globe* describes her as “a force of nature.” while *Rolling Stone* calls her a “cello rock star.” Raised in Israel’s Galilee Mountains, surrounded by the music and rituals of Jews, Muslims, and Christians, Beiser has reinvented solo cello performance in the mainstream arena. A featured performer on prestigious stages including Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Kennedy Center, London’s Southbank Centre, the Barbican, Sydney Opera House, and the Beijing Festival, she has collaborated with renowned artists, composers, choreographers, and filmmakers across many disciplines. Beiser has released 10 solo albums, topping the classical music charts with many of her recordings. Maya Beiser is a 2015 United States Artists Distinguished Fellow and a 2017 Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist at MIT; her TED Talk has more than one million views. [www.mayabeiser.com](http://www.mayabeiser.com)

**Melody Giron** (Cello), an award-winning cellist, has performed in concert halls of China, Europe, South America, Central America, and the United States with orchestras and chamber groups and as a soloist. Performances include venues such as Carnegie Hall (New York), Symphony Hall (Boston, MA), Snape Maltings Concert Hall (Aldeburgh, England), Radio City Music Hall (NYC), Madison Square

Garden (NYC), and Prudential Center (NJ), among many others. In addition to an active classical solo and orchestral career, Giron's versatility has engaged her in many new music projects, performances on Off-Broadway theater stages, and collaborations with the likes of Stevie Wonder, Andra Day, and Keyshia Cole. Giron plays cello on multiple TV shows and stars in a GMC car commercial. She received her bachelor's degree from the New England Conservatory of Music and earned her master's degree from Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. [melodygiron.com](http://melodygiron.com)

**Lavena Johanson** (Cello) is a commanding performer and a consummate musician. As a soloist and chamber musician, she has performed new and recent works by Ted Hearne, Amy Beth Kirsten, Caroline Shaw, and Anna Thorvaldsdottir on Baltimore's Evolution Contemporary Music Series. She was a founding member of the Atlas String Quartet, semi-finalists at the 2014 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition. Johanson has also premiered and recorded two pieces written expressly for her by her husband, Judah Adashi, and is only the second cellist ever to perform both of Michael Hersch's Sonatas for Unaccompanied Cello in one night. Recent appearances include a return to the Evolution Series, where she performed Bryce Dessner's *Tuusula* for solo cello, and also a performance of Bach's Second Suite for Unaccompanied Cello at the Baltimore Bach Marathon, fulfilling the second year of her six-year Bach Suites performance project. [lavenajohanson.com](http://lavenajohanson.com)

## Creative Team

**Julia Wolfe** (Concept/Music and Text) composes music distinguished by intense physicality and relentless power that pushes performers to extremes and demands attention from the audience. Her Pulitzer-winning *Anthracite Fields* (chorus and ensemble) draws on oral histories, interviews, speeches, and more to honor the people who persevered and endured in the anthracite coal region. *Steel Hammer* (three singers and ensemble) celebrates the John Henry legend. In 2019, the New York Philharmonic premieres Wolfe's *Fire in my mouth* (orchestra and women's chorus) on the subject of New York's garment industry at the turn of the century. Upcoming projects include works for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New World Symphony, and So Percussion. Wolfe is a 2016 MacArthur Fellow and a 2015 Alpert Award recipient. She is Artistic Director of Composition at NYU/Steinhardt



and co-founded New York's legendary Bang on a Can. Her music is published by Red Poppy, Ltd. (ASCAP), distributed worldwide by G. Schirmer, Inc., and recorded on Cantaloupe Music. [www.juliawolfemusic.com](http://www.juliawolfemusic.com)

**Laurie Olinder** (Projection Art and Design) is a multimedia designer, painter, and photographer. Projection design credits include *Anatomy Theater* (Red Cat Theater, Los Angeles Opera); *The Sinking of the Titanic* (Big Ears Festival); Brooklyn Youth Chorus with the Kronos Quartet (Roulette, Brooklyn, NY); *Silent Cranes* (Roulette, Brooklyn), composed by Mary Kouyoumdjian; *Bubbles* (Roulette, Brooklyn), composed by Aleksandra Vrebalov; *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field* (Montclair State University); *Lightning at Our Feet* (Brooklyn Academy of Music); *11 Excerpts: Philip Glass Operas* (University of Miami); Symphony no. 3 by Henryk Gorecki (Brooklyn Academy of Music with the Brooklyn Philharmonic); *Decasia* (Basel, Switzerland; St. Ann's Warehouse; Angel Orensanz); *Shelter*, Bang on a Can (Brooklyn Academy of Music); and *The Death of Klinghoffer* (Brooklyn Academy of Music). Olinder is a founding member of New York's Ridge Theater and has been recognized with an OBIE Award, a New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award and an Eliot Norton Award for Outstanding Design in the Theater, and a NYFA fellowship. [www.laurieolinder.com](http://www.laurieolinder.com)

**Dave Cook** (Sound Designer), a native New Yorker, has been a sound engineer for many years and comes from a background immersed in recording studios, theaters, and concert settings. His work in the pop/rock world has landed him Gold and Platinum album credits with artists such as 10,000 Maniacs, the B-52s (he engineered everyone's favorite backyard barbecue song, "The Love Shack"), and others including Nick Cave, Graham Parker, The Golden Palominos, Amy Helm, and many more. He has mixed shows with David Bowie, Radiohead, and Morphine, to name a few. His current and previous live concert touring/mixing credits include Natalie Merchant, Todd Rundgren, Carly Simon, Ravi Shankar, Anoushka Shankar, Terry Riley, Marc Cohn, ETHEL, Laurie Anderson, Medeski Martin & Wood, and of course, Maya Beiser. Cook owns and operates Area 52 Studios in Saugerties, NY, and lives with his family and pets in Saugerties as well. [area-52-studios.com](http://area-52-studios.com)

**Aaron Copp** (Lighting Designer) previously collaborated with Maya Beiser on *All Vows* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) in 2015. Other recent projects include *One Line Drawn*, created by Brian Brooks for Miami City Ballet with music by

Michael Gordon, *Shahrazad* for the Royal Ballet of Flanders, and *Rules of the Game*, created by Jonah Bokaer, Daniel Arsham, and Pharrell Williams. Music collaborations include tours for the Silk Road Ensemble, Natalie Merchant, and *The Goat Rodeo Sessions* as well as music-theater pieces with So Percussion at BAM and the Bang on a Can All-Stars at Lincoln Center. He has worked extensively in the dance world and in 2008 received his second Bessie Award for Jonah Bokaer's *The Invention of Minus One*. He had a long association with Merce Cunningham, designing such pieces as *Ground Level Overlay*, *Windows*, and *Biped*, for which he also won a Bessie. Copp has an MFA from the Yale School of Drama. [aaroncopp.com](http://aaroncopp.com)

**Netta Yerushalmy** (Choreographer) received a Guggenheim Fellowship, Grant to Artists from Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Jerome Robbins Bogliasco Fellowship, NYFA Fellowship, and the Toulmin Fellowship for Women Leaders in Dance at NYU's Center for Ballet. Her current project, *Paramodernities*, received the National Dance Project award from the New England Foundation for the Arts. Yerushalmy's works have been presented by venues such as the Joyce Theater, Jacob's Pillow Dance, American Dance Festival, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Watermill Center, Danspace Project, New York Live Arts, Suzanne Dellal Center (Tel Aviv), and Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin). Yerushalmy works across genres and disciplines: she contributed to artist Josiah McElheny's project for the Madison Square Park Conservancy, choreographed a Red Hot Chili Peppers music video, and has collaborated on evenings of theory and performance at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry (Berlin). Her work has been commissioned by repertory companies and universities all around the United States. [nettay.com](http://nettay.com)

**Diego Montoya** (Costume Designer) is a visual artist and costume designer living in Brooklyn, New York, originally Lima, Peru. His work expands to many fields including circus, fashion, theater, and film. [DiegoMontoyaStudio.com](http://DiegoMontoyaStudio.com)



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The **Office of Arts + Cultural Programming** (ACP) enhances the cultural, creative, and academic life of the Montclair State campus and the broader community. Its signature program, Peak Performances, features innovative works by international contemporary artists of exceptional merit, and by the next generation of great artists training at Montclair State University's College of the Arts. Through its Cultural Engagement program, ACP offers master classes, workshops, lectures, and discussions designed to deepen participants' understanding of the aesthetic, cultural, and social contexts of the performances presented.

**ACP gratefully acknowledges our student staff and volunteers:**

Peak Ambassadors **Ciara Allen, Maelle Vladina Antoine, Melody Appel,**

**Janel Brown, Annie Castoro, Veronica Gagliardi, Brian Lanigan,**

**Cristina Latino, Emily Leddy, Waverley Leung, Hailey Nichols, Lauren O'Brien,**

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To view our complete season and for more information, visit [peakperfs.org](http://peakperfs.org).

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