

## **Ensemble Mik Nawooj, Crowded Fire Theater, and AXIS Dance Company**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**press page: [www.crowdedfire.org/press](http://www.crowdedfire.org/press)**

**Announcing**

**DEATH BECOME LIFE: BANISH DARKNESS**

*a future vision by Crowded Fire Theater, AXIS Dance Company, Star Finch, and Ensemble Mik Nawooj*

**November 16-17, 2018**

**at Presenting Sponsor BAYVIEW OPERA HOUSE RUTH WILLIAMS MEMORIAL THEATRE**

4705 3rd Street, San Francisco

**San Francisco Bay Area** - Three established Bay Area performance organizations are coming together to create a new immersive multidisciplinary experience, offering a future vision of catharsis, engagement, and optimism, so needed in this cultural moment. The powerful storytelling of **Crowded Fire Theater** and playwright **Star Finch**, the musical and poetic impetus of **Ensemble Mik Nawooj**, and the diverse and unique physical rhythms of **AXIS Dance Company** come together at the beautiful Bayview Opera House Ruth Williams Memorial Theatre. In this immersive study of aesthetics, the artists merge hip-hop, contemporary dance, and theater into a boundary-pushing work featuring a 12-person orchestra; a work which challenges the conventions of performing arts at large while creating a future vision that can be replicated in communities in need of healing throughout the country.

This vision unites JooWan Kim, a composer who samples classical compositional techniques & hip-hop for his orchestral Ensemble Mik Nawooj and Crowded Fire Theater Company, which has 20 years experience developing innovative new plays that break traditional boundaries. With choreography by AXIS Dance Company's Artistic Director Marc Brew and their dancers with and without disabilities, and supported by Presenting Sponsor the Bayview Opera House, the companies have created a unique communal event that pulls in the audience as a final collaborator.

"This is the first full iteration of EMN's modular work, Death Become Life," says **EMN Artistic Director JooWan Kim**, "which uses region specific collaborations with dance, theater, and visual arts. After our SF beta version, we'll set up multiple variations in select cities within U.S. and abroad. Each variation will uniquely express the culture of the region along with different storylines, sets, and format of execution."

"We're celebrating 20 years of innovation — and expanding what theater is —with this intrepid collaboration," says **CFT Artistic Director Mina Morita**. "Crowded Fire is known nationally for being a vital home for fierce new plays, thanks to our Matchbox development program, and we're thrilled to be stretching that program with this remarkable piece."

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Support for this production comes from the National Endowment for the Arts, The Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, Red Sand Media Partners, and the Zellerbach Family Foundation. Additional funding for Crowded Fire's Matchbox Productions comes from the Kenneth Rainin Foundation.

## **BIOS**

**JooWan Kim:** After a successful performance of a novelty piece which featured an MC and chamber ensemble while completing his master's degree at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, composer JooWan Kim had a profound shift in the direction of his writing. He felt that he found a way out of the stifling contemporary concert music aesthetic in this new way of composition. JooWan crystallized his ideas into ***Method Sampling***, a principle of borrowing or *sampling* of rationales from related as well as unrelated fields, then reframing them into one's own system. In 2010, Kim recruited his best friend from college, EMN's executive director, Christopher Nicholas, to push the project forward in a serious way. Since then, his group [Ensemble Mik Nawooj](#) has attracted some of the most excellent classical musicians and MCs in the SF Bay Area while gaining national attention from outlets such as *National Geographic*, *Global People's Summit in partnership with the United Nations Office of Partnerships*, *ESPN*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Huffington Post*, *NPR*, *Pitchfork*, *Upworthy*, *NowThis*, and more. He is represented by [Opus 3 Artists](#).

**Mina Morita** is the Artistic Director of Crowded Fire Theater, a critically acclaimed, intrepid, female-led company dedicated to developing a fierce contemporary theater canon that reflects the plurality of our world. Previously, she served as the Artistic Associate at Berkeley Repertory Theatre—and a founding member of its Ground Floor program; as Board President of Shotgun Players; as a 2014 Lincoln Center Director's Lab participant; as one of the founding members of Bay Area Children's Theatre; as Community Arts Panelist with the Zellerbach Family Foundation; and Guest Artist at UC Berkeley and Stanford University. She is a recipient of Theatre Bay Area's 2014 award for Best Director of a Musical: Tier II and TBA's 2016, 40@40 award for her impact on Bay Area Theater. In 2015, Mina was honored to share her story on TEDx, and in 2016, she was chosen as one of the YBCA100, for "asking questions and making provocations that will shape the future of culture."

**Marc Brew:** Acclaimed International choreographer and AXIS Artistic Director Marc Brew trained as a professional dancer at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School and The Australian Ballet School. He has been working in the UK and Internationally for the past 20 years as a director, choreographer, dancer, teacher and speaker; with the Australian Ballet Company, State Theatre Ballet Company of South Africa, Infinity Dance Theatre, CandoCo Dance Company and AXIS Dance Company. Marc was Associate Director with Scottish Dance Theatre, Associate Artistic Director with Ballet Cymru in Wales and was Associate Artist in 2015 at Tramway Theatre in Glasgow. Since 2008 Marc has been dedicating time to his own choreography with Marc Brew Company and his recent choreographic commissions include Scottish Ballet, Ballet Cymru, YDance, AXIS Dance Company (USA), Candoco Dance Company (UK), Touch Compass (NZ), Amy Seiwert's Imagery (USA), GDance, Scottish Dance Theatre, Greewnich & Docklands International Festival and City of London Festival (UK). Marc was featured by Time Out Magazine as the best of the new breed of London's Rising Dance Talent and was presented with a Centenary Medal for Outstanding Contribution as a dancer and choreographer. His work REMEMBER WHEN was nominated for an Isadora Duncan Dance Award for Best Performance (individual) and his recent solo work FOR NOW, I AM... was listed in the Guardians Top 10 Dance Shows for 2016. For more information visit: [www.marcbrew.com](http://www.marcbrew.com)

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**Star Finch:** As a Campo Santo company member, Star Finch's first full-length play H.O.M.E. (Hookers on Mars Eventually) was produced in 2016. AlterTheater produced her play BONDAGE in 2017. Later that same year she contributed writing to TheaterFirst's PARTICIPANTS and Campo Santo's ETHOS DE MASQUERADE. Star is a Princess Grace Award semifinalist, a Relentless Award honorable mention, and a current resident in Crowded Fire's R&D LAB. She holds a BA in Anthropology and an MA in Creative Writing from SF State.

**Ensemble Mik Nawooj:** Led by composer/pianist, JooWan Kim, Hip Hop Orchestra Ensemble Mik Nawooj (EMN) creates New Concert Music by sampling principles of Hip-Hop and Classical. Executed with MCs/lyricists Do D.A.T. and Sandman, a lyric soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, drums and bass, the music is rigorous, nuanced, accessible, and free from the dogmas of Western European concert music aesthetic. The result has "EMN join an elite crew of Oakland artists—Boots Riley (Sorry to Bother You), Daveed Diggs (Blindspotting), Ryan Coogler (Black Panther), Fantastic Negrito and others—who are changing national and global cultural conversations with their work" (NPR).

**Crowded Fire Theater's** ensemble produces poetic, bold theater created by new and contemporary artists. We seek to engage our community by producing adventurous work, innovative in structure, which addresses the diverse political and social concerns of our audiences. Crowded Fire was recently described in American Theatre Magazine as "instrumental in introducing the Bay Area to new writers who push the boundaries of what theatre can be" and "one of the most reliable local stops for high-quality new work by diverse voices."

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**For Calendar Editors:**

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*With Presenting Sponsor Bayview Opera House*

November 16-17, 2018

Bayview Opera House Ruth Williams Memorial Theatre, 4705 3rd Street, San Francisco

**PERFORMANCES:**

November 16, 8:00pm

November 17, 3:00pm *and* 8:00pm

Ticket Price: \$25

Tickets: Visit [www.crowdedfire.org/dbl-banish-darkness](http://www.crowdedfire.org/dbl-banish-darkness) for more information and to purchase tickets.

Box Office by phone (415) 523-0034 ext 1

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