

PITTSBURGH PLAYHOUSE

POINT PARK UNIVERSITY



MAI KHOI

BAD ACTIVIST

7PM, 9.15.22 PITTSBURGH PLAYHOUSE
350 FORBES AVENUE
PITTSBURGH, PA

PRESENTED BY



INTERNATIONAL
Free Expression
Project



**CENTER FOR
MEDIA INNOVATION**
Point Park University

BAD ACTIVIST

Bad Activist

Music by Mai Khôi and Ngọc Đại

Lyrics by Mai Khôi, Bùi Chát, and Nguyễn Đình Chính

Book by Mai Khôi, Benjamin Swanton, Cynthia Croot, and Mark Micchelli

Musical Direction and Arrangements by Mark Micchelli

Directed by Cynthia Croot

Shawn Duan Projection Designer

Ridley Walker Associate Projection Designer

Aaron Henderson Video Designer

Brandy N. Carie Dramaturg

Nguyễn Quý Đức Lyrics Translations

Đại Ngô and Cynthia Croot Archival Photos and Videos

Mai Khôi and the Dissidents

Mai Khôi vocals and đàn goong

Alec Zander Redd alto and tenor saxophone

Mark Micchelli piano and electric keyboard

Eli Namay acoustic and electric bass

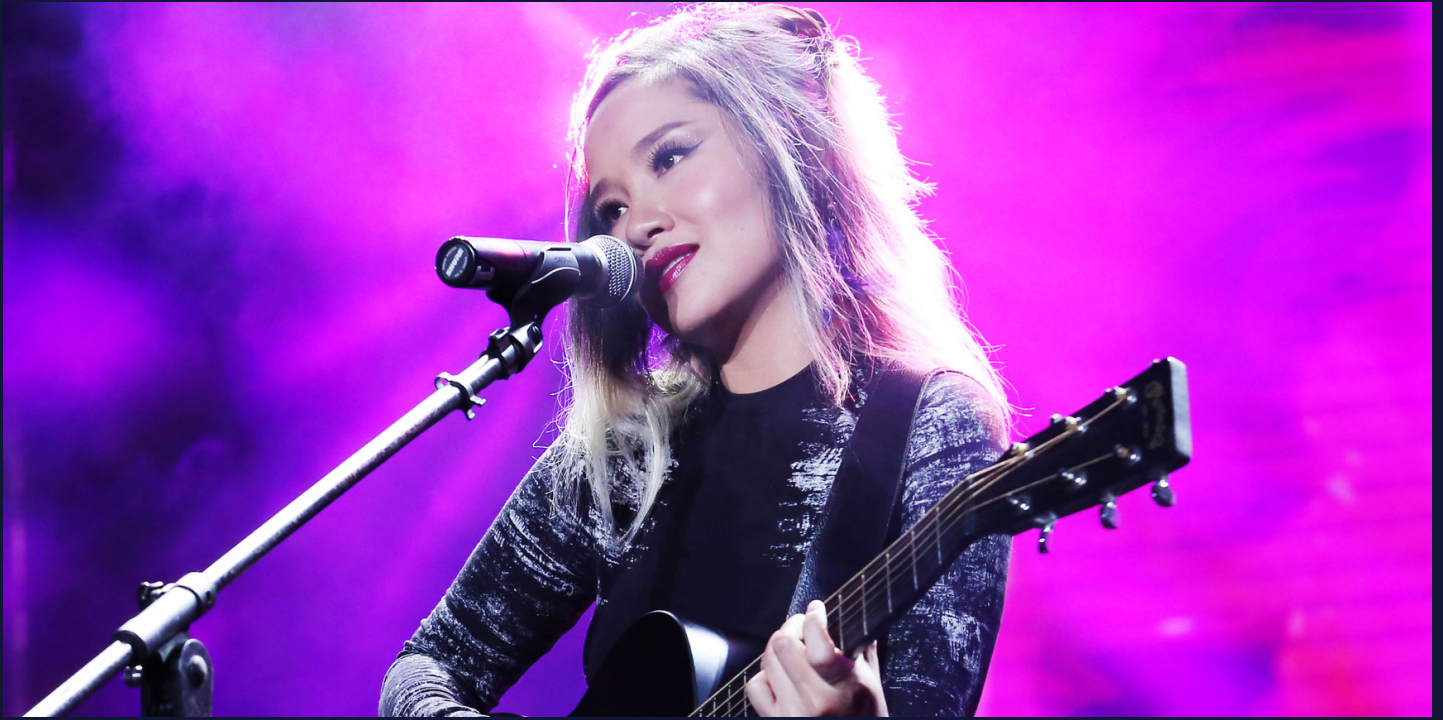
PJ Roduta drums and percussion

Mimi Jong special guest, erhu

BAD ACTIVIST

Songs

1. The Horizon
2. Reeducation Camp
3. Sisters
4. Please, Sir!
5. Bus Trips
6. Lanninh
7. Just Be Patient
8. Bitches Get Things Done
9. The Invisible Wall
10. Meow Meow
11. Questions
12. Take It to the Streets

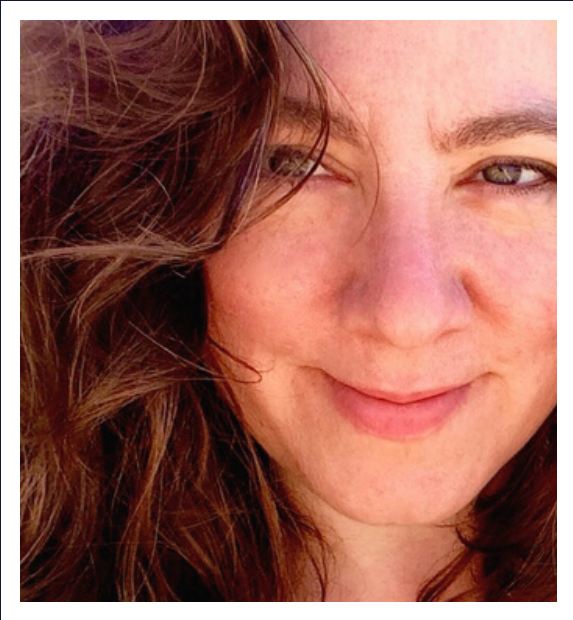


Mai Khôi

Mai Khôi is an award-winning Vietnamese singer, composer, and activist. In 2010, she rose to stardom after winning Vietnam's most prestigious award for songwriting. As a pop star, Khôi released seven albums and made regular nationally televised performances. At the height of her fame, her engagement with activism brought her into conflict with Vietnam's authoritarian government and transformed her artistic practice. In recognition of her work at the intersection of art and activism, she was awarded the Václav Havel Prize for Creative Dissent in 2018 and the Four Freedoms Award for Freedom of Speech in 2022. Since 2019, Khôi has lived in exile in the USA, where she is currently an Artist in Residence at City of Asylum in Pittsburgh, PA. Her project Bad Activist weaves story, song, and spectacle, interrogating the relationship between art and activism and the fraught terrain navigated by artists of conscience who refuse to be silenced.

MAI KHÔI

Cynthia Croot



Cynthia Croot is director whose practice-based research explores diverse modalities of immersive theatre, social justice activation through the arts, and intercultural performance. Croot has collaborated on a range of international projects in the UK, South Africa, Argentina, Syria, Palestine, and Israel. She's worked at dozens of US venues, including Joe's Pub, Symphony Space, the Stonington Opera House, the Smithsonian American History Museum, the Kennedy Center, and the Guggenheim Museum. She earned her MFA in Directing from Columbia University, was an NEA Fellow, and currently serves as Chair of Theatre Arts at the University of Pittsburgh.

Mark Micchelli



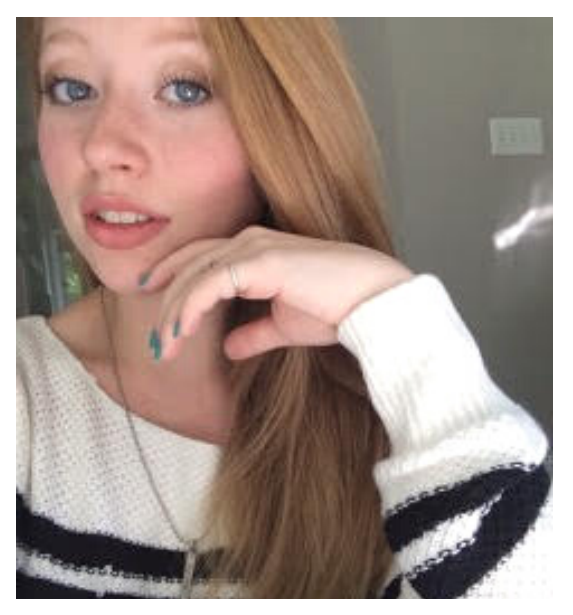
Mark Micchelli is a pianist, composer, improviser, technologist, and scholar based in Pittsburgh, PA. He can be found playing all types of music, including contemporary classical, experimental pop, straight-ahead jazz, progressive Latin music, and lots in between. As musical director and arranger for Mai Khôi, Mark presented work at Joe's Pub in New York, City of Asylum in Pittsburgh, Area 15 in Las Vegas, Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Italy, and the Four Freedoms Award ceremony in Middelburg, Netherlands. As a musician-academic, Mark has presented work at SMT, ICMC, SEAMUS, Stravinsky in America Conference, Unit Structures: The Art of Cecil Taylor Conference, Bowling Green New Music Festival, Music on the Edge, SPLICE Festival, Oh My Ears Festival, and New Music on the Point. Mark is currently completing his PhD at the University of Pittsburgh, where he splits his time between the Jazz Studies and Composition/Theory departments. markmicchelli.net.

Shawn Duan



Shawn Duan is a New York-based Projections/Media Designer. Recently in New York: Letters of Suresh (2nd Stage. Lortel Award, OCC nomination), The Chinese Lady (Ma-Yi/The Public. Lortel nomination, Drama Desk nomination). Other NYC credits: the MET Museum, New York City Opera, the Public Theater. Regional credits: Arena Stage, The Alliance, Berkeley Repertory, Dallas Theater Center, Denver Center, The Guthrie, The MUNY, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Rep, South Coast Repertory. Tour/Concert work include: An Evening with Pacino (US/international), HK Arts Festival, numerous US commercial entertainment tours and Las Vegas shows/concerts.

Ridley Walker



Ridley is grateful to be joining Bad Activist. Credits include: The Kite Runner (Hayes Theatre), Between Two Knees (Yale Rep), The Chinese Lady (Public Theatre), Letters of Suresh (2nd Stage), Cabaret (NYU). Thank you to my partner Luke for sharing me with the arts we love so dearly.

BAD ACTIVIST

Aaron Henderson



Aaron Henderson's photographs, videos and installations engage in an ongoing critique of our relationship to spectacle, technology and performance. He believes that is only through a thorough examination of ourselves—and our culture—that we can discover what we were, what we are, and what we are becoming.

Well acquainted with movement, he threw himself into walls and off of platforms for STREB Extreme Action, an acrobatic performance company from 2002-6. His videos and installations have been presented at the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Wexner Center, and many other museums and galleries. His projection designs have been presented at Lincoln Center, the Andy Warhol Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston) and theaters and festivals around the world. Aaron is an Associate Professor in the Department of Studio Arts at the University of Pittsburgh.

Brandy N. Carie



Brandy N. Carie is a writer and dramaturg originally from Minnesota but currently living in Los Angeles. As a dramaturg Carie has worked at Northlight Theatre, Steep Theatre, and American Theatre Company, and served as Literary Assistant and later Interim Literary Manager at Houston's Alley Theatre. Carie has taught writing and theatre at Carnegie Mellon University, Houston HSPVA, 826LA, Main Street Theatre, and the NHSI "Cherubs" Program. Carie's writing for stage and screen won a Sloan/CMU Screenwriting Award, a Kennedy Center ACTF Steinberg Playwriting Award, and was a finalist for the Princess Grace Award. She was commissioned by Alter Ego Chamber Opera in 2021, and her animated short was produced by New Opera West in 2022. Her plays have been produced and developed by Barter Theatre, Mildred's Umbrella Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Pittsburgh's City Theatre, and produced by Smith & Kraus. MFA, Carnegie Mellon University. brandyncarie.com.

Alec Zander Redd



Alec Zander Redd (they/them) is a Philadelphia-born freelance saxophonist, music teacher, and composer who has been a resident of the city of Pittsburgh for four years. They have performed with nearly twenty musical groups across seven years of playing professionally, including the Grammy-nominated Afro Yaqui Music Collective, Glenn Strother Project, Matt Otis & The Sound, theCAUSE, Black Ridge, AFRO N'AT, Trailheads, and Habatat, to name a few. Through their work with Afro Yaqui Music Collective and the Pittonkatonk Education Program, they were able to guest teach at Sto-Rox High School in McKees Rocks this past year, culminating in a performance featuring the students at the Pittonkatonk music festival. Alec is passionate about making music education accessible to people regardless of any socio-economic barriers, and is working towards creating more spaces and opportunities for anyone to be able to pursue music in whatever way they wish.

Eli Namay



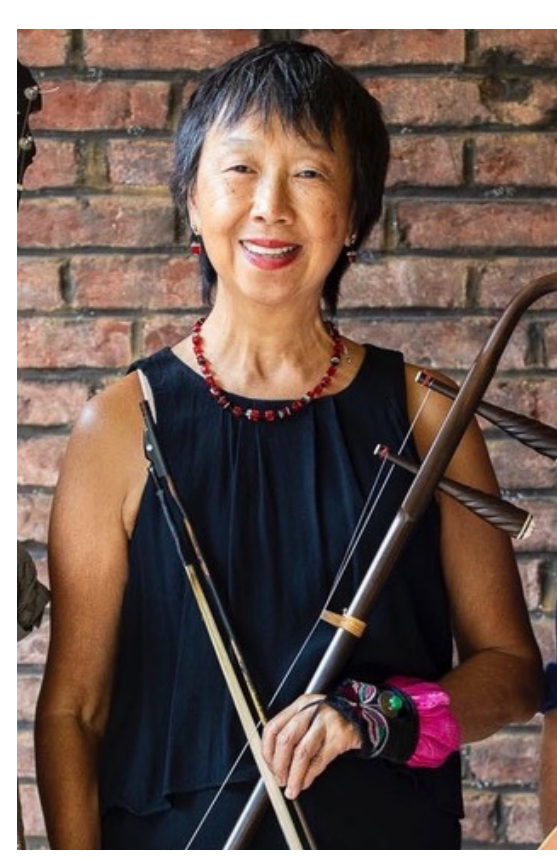
Bassist and composer Eli Namay is from a Syrian / Lebanese immigrant community in Charleston, WV. After studying music at Columbia College (2008-13), Eli worked in various creative and heritage music scenes in Chicago and continues to be a staple in the improvised music community there. They have also been deeply involved with community organizing around prison and police abolition, Medicare for All, labor issues, and more. Now located in Pittsburgh, Eli is in graduate school at Pitt studying the creation and destruction of cultural space both through an economic and emotional / behavioral lens. Alongside Mark and Khôi, is working with local musicians and artist to organize space for participatory creative and improvised music and performance.

PJ Roduta



PJ is a Pittsburgh-based drummer/percussionist with a BA in music, an MA in Adult Education, and 4 months traditional Ghanaian music study at University of Ghana. His training at Bennington College with Jazz pioneer Milford Graves included folkloric rhythms, avant-garde jazz, and cardiac-centric tono-rhythmology. PJ is a member of International Guild of Musicians in Dance. He has accompanied dance for Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts and been resident artist at The Space Upstairs since 2007. PJ has scored 15 dance/film productions for companies in Pittsburgh, Houston, Denver, Dayton, Cleveland, Minneapolis, and NYC. PJ completed the Mark Morris accompanist training in Brooklyn and was awarded a grant to apprentice with ritual groove composer Nik Baertsch in Switzerland. PJ leads his band Else Collective and is a member of Pittsburgh's Ghanaian fusion band Kinetic, and David Bernabo's studio band Watererer.

Mimi Jong



Mimi Jong regularly performs the erhu, an ancient Chinese two-string fiddle, in a wide variety of cross-disciplinary settings. By moving beyond tradition and embracing the erhu's versatility, she has brought erhu to modern movement combining its hauntingly beautiful voice with dance, theater, poetry and other ground-breaking cinematic performances.

As an alumni of Yo Yo Ma's Silkroad Global Musician Workshop, she subscribes to the philosophy that communing through music transcends cultures and genres. Her music straddles between cultures and dissolving boundaries. Creating new overlapping musical frontiers is her passion. Mimi was a recipient of the 2014 "Master Artists and Tradition Bearers Award" from Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area. As the former music program director for "Silk Screen Arts and Cultural Organization" and the board president/founding member of "HarmoniZing", Mimi's contributions include inviting international performing artists for concerts and residencies, providing a platform for diverse expression in Pittsburgh's cultural landscape.

Special Thanks To

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Mai Khoi dedicates this performance of "Bad Activist" to one of the Best Activists in the world: Salman Rushdie, who has lived under threat of death for decades for defending free expression and is still recovering from wounds he sustained in a knife attack last month at Chautauqua Institution in New York.



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