

THE SHED Press Release

THE **BLOOMBERG** BUILDING
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The Shed Announces *An Audience with...*, Indoor Live Music and Comedy Series in April featuring Kelsey Lu, the New York Philharmonic, Renée Fleming, and Michelle Wolf as part of New York's Revitalization of Live Performance

Additional 2021 Spring/Summer Programs Include *Open Call* Exhibition and Performances by NYC-based Early-career Artists; and Partnerships with Frieze New York and Tribeca Film Festival



The Shed's McCourt configured for *An Audience With...* live performance series. Photo: Jasdeep Kang.

March 10, 2021 — The Shed, the new nonprofit arts center on Manhattan's west side, today announced *An Audience with...*, a five-night indoor performance series from April 2 to 22 produced by The Shed in accordance with New York State health guidelines. The series will bring back audiences to experience live music and comedy safely, and performances will take place in The Shed's flexible 18,000-square-foot McCourt space with a state-of-the-art MERV ventilation system, 115-foot-high ceilings, and distanced seating for 150 people.

An Audience with... opens with singer and cellist **Kelsey Lu** on April 2 and continues with musicians from the **New York Philharmonic** on April 14 and 15, soprano **Renée Fleming** on April 21, and comedian **Michelle Wolf** on April 22. All performances are at 8 pm.

An Audience with... will kick off The Shed's spring/summer program including 27 local artists in the second edition of *Open Call*, a large-scale commissioning program for NYC-based early-career artists across performance, visual arts, and popular culture, opening in June. The Shed is also partnering with Frieze New York, which will bring the city's premier art fair with over 60 galleries to The Shed in May, and will collaborate with the Tribeca Film Festival on programs at The Shed in June. Additional programs to be announced.

Alex Poots, Artistic Director and CEO of The Shed, said, “After an unprecedented yearlong shutdown of indoor performance in New York, The Shed looks to once again celebrate the irreplaceable communal experience of attending a live show. Through music and comedy, we hope *An Audience with...* will provide some much-needed beauty and joy for both artists and audiences and, along with our other spring/summer programs, will contribute to our city’s recovery.”

“I believe that the exchange between audience and performer is vital to the energy flow of life, and it’s absence has left such a void for us all,” said Kelsey Lu. “I’m beyond honored to be one of the first to open up this flow again at The Shed and look forward to feeling everyone’s presence.”

“When I performed in its very first events, I was struck by the architectural innovation of The Shed, especially the amazing flexible enclosure of The McCourt,” said Renée Fleming. “It could not be more ideal for these unusual circumstances, as we finally begin to gather again, safely, for live performances.”

With guidance from the NYS Department of Health, The Shed is implementing a thorough plan to ensure a safe experience for the audience, artists, and staff. To reduce person-to-person interaction at *An Audience with...*, attendance will be limited to 12 percent of The McCourt’s seated capacity with the audience seated in pairs and socially distanced six feet apart. There will be contactless ticket scanning, timed entry and exit, and no coat check, intermission, food/drink concessions, nor merchandise sales. The artists will perform a single set no longer than 80 minutes and, with the exception of performers who must sing or speak, all performers will be masked and distanced by 12 feet on stage.

All patrons will be required to adhere to the following guidelines as detailed by the NYS Department of Health:

- Upon arrival, attendees must present one of the following: confirmation of a negative Covid-19 PCR/NAAT test taken within 72 hours of the event start time or a Covid-19 antigen “rapid” test within six hours of the event start time, or confirmation of having completed the Covid-19 vaccination series at least 14 days prior to the date of the event
- Temperature check
- Covid-19 health questionnaire completed pre-arrival
- Participation in contact tracing
- Remain masked and seated except for entry/exit/restroom use

Tickets will go on sale next week; details are available on [TheShed.org](https://www.theshed.org). Continuing The Shed’s commitment to accessibility and lowering barriers to entry, 10 percent of tickets to *An Audience with...* will be distributed free to nonprofit partners via The Shed’s Ticket Access Program.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Press assets for *An Audience With...* available for download [here](#).

Kelsey Lu is a classically trained cellist and polymuse from Charlotte, North Carolina. Lu’s artistic practice channels intersections between visual arts, performance, healing activism, and music. In addition to their solo work, they find collaborations to be fundamental in the expansion of their practice, which has brought them to intertwine with artists across a wide array of disciplines from within music, film, fashion, and the fine arts.

The **New York Philharmonic** connects with up to 50 million people around the world annually through concerts, broadcasts, recordings, education outreach, and free or low-cost performances, including the *Concerts in the Parks*, presented by Didi and Oscar Schafer; *Phil the Hall*; and *Young People's Concerts*. In 2019 – 20, after three consecutive weeks featuring world premieres as part of *Project 19*—the largest-ever all-women's commissioning initiative—the Orchestra had to cancel concerts due to Covid-19. The Philharmonic responded by launching a portal to hundreds of hours of recorded performances and *NY Phil Bandwagon*, free, outdoor “pull-up” concerts presenting small groups of the Orchestra's musicians.

The Philharmonic has commissioned and/or premiered works by leading composers since its founding in 1842, including Dvořak's *New World Symphony*; John Adams's Pulitzer Prize-winning *On the Transmigration of Souls*, dedicated to the victims of 9/11; and Julia Wolfe's Grammy-nominated *Fire in my mouth*. Jaap van Zweden became music director of the oldest American symphony orchestra—and one of the oldest in the world—in September 2018, succeeding titans including Bernstein, Toscanini, and Mahler.

Renée Fleming is one of the most highly acclaimed singers of our time, performing in the world's greatest opera houses and concert halls, and honored with four Grammy Awards and the US National Medal of Arts. In 2014, she became the first classical artist ever to sing the National Anthem at the Super Bowl. On January 20, Fleming sang in the private church service attended by President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris prior to the inauguration.

In 2019, Fleming appeared opposite Ben Whishaw in *Norma Jeane Baker of Troy* in the opening of The Shed. She earned a Tony nomination for the 2018 Broadway production of *Carousel*. She has recorded everything from complete operas to jazz, indie rock, and the soundtracks of Best Picture Oscar-winners *The Shape of Water* and *The Lord of the Rings*. A leading advocate for research at the intersection of arts, health, and neuroscience, she has given presentations with scientists around the world on this subject.

On the heels of **Michelle Wolf's** latest Netflix special, *Michelle Wolf: Joke Show*, Wolf is back with all new material. Wolf has quickly become one of the most influential voices in the comedy landscape with the *Village Voice* calling her “the voice comedy needs right now” and the *Daily Beast* declaring, “Michelle Wolf is the future of stand-up comedy.” In 2017, she debuted her first hour-long stand-up special, *Michelle Wolf: Nice Lady*, on HBO for which she received rave reviews and a Primetime Emmy nomination for Outstanding Writing for A Variety Special.

In 2018, she made international headlines as the much buzzed-about headliner of the White House Correspondents Dinner. Wolf's other television credits include *The Break with Michelle Wolf* and being an on-air contributor and writer for *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* and a writing supervisor and performer on *Late Night with Seth Meyers*.

An Audience with... is presented in partnership with Live Nation, the New York Philharmonic, and [NY PopsUp](#), as part of New York's revitalization of live performance.



CURRENT AND UPCOMING PROGRAMMING

Howardena Pindell: Rope/Fire/Water

On view through March 28, 2021

This solo exhibition by Howardena Pindell explores the brutality of racism and the healing power of art. It includes Pindell's first video work in decades, a project unrealized by the artist since the 1970s that The Shed commissioned, as well as new large-scale paintings and several abstract paintings from earlier in her career.

Open Call

June 4 through August 1, 2021

Launched as part of The Shed's opening year program, *Open Call* is a large-scale commissioning program for early-career NYC-based artists. For its second iteration, 27 new artists will present new works in The Shed's Level 2 Gallery and The McCourt. Each artist was selected by interdisciplinary leaders and professionals in their fields, including other artists and members of The Shed's staff, to present work in 2021 and 2022. Selected artists received a commissioning fee of up to \$15,000 depending on the scope of their projects, robust production support, and resources to further nurture their practices and expand their audiences.



From Our Partner

As a proud supporter of the arts, M&T Bank is honored to be The Founding Bank of The Shed and supporting our shared commitment to our communities and the belief that creative arts should be accessible to all. To learn more about M&T's sponsorships, please visit us at <https://www3.mtb.com/sponsorship>

Support

An Audience with... is supported by M&T Bank. The creation of new work at The Shed is generously supported by the Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Commissioning Fund and the Shed Commissioners. Major support for live productions at The Shed is provided by the Charina Endowment Fund. The Shed is connected by Altice.

About The Shed

The Shed is a new cultural institution of and for the 21st century. We produce and welcome innovative art and ideas, across all forms of creativity, to build a shared understanding of our rapidly changing world and a more equitable society. In our highly adaptable building on Manhattan's west side, The Shed brings together established and emerging artists to create new work in fields ranging from pop to classical music, painting to digital media, theater to literature, and sculpture to dance.

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We seek opportunities to collaborate with cultural peers and community organizations, work with like-minded partners, and provide unique spaces for private events. As an independent nonprofit that values invention, equity, and generosity, we are committed to advancing art forms, addressing the urgent issues of our time, and making our work impactful, sustainable, and relevant to the local community, the cultural sector, New York City, and beyond.
