



SET & COSTUME DESIGNER OPEN CALL: ECSTASY OF THE VIRTUES 2026

**We are looking for a set and costume designer for our new commission
by Nwando Ebizie**

If it would be more accessible to have this information in another format, please email bridget@mahoganyopera.co.uk

Ecstasy of the Virtues is a multisensory operatic performance inspired by Nwando's exploration of the life of Hildegard von Bingen, viewed from Nwando's perspective as a Neurodivergent Afrofuturist. Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179), Benedictine abbess, composer, visual artist, writer and mystic; not only a visionary, but also, uniquely for the time, a woman whose visions were recorded and preserved in musical scores, writings and illuminated manuscripts, lives again in new form. *Ecstasy of the Virtues* will be a 75-minute performance inspired by Hildegard's opera/mystery play of the same name. It will feature 12 performers; singing & live instruments, spatialised electronic soundscapes, dance, and sculptural lighting and projections.

Rooted in creative accessibility, theatrical signing, creative captions, audio description and a 'relaxed' feel are all embedded into the piece rather than added on.

**The truth gleams forth in human form,
and therefore we shine clear
We are the word - spirit incarnate,
Shining souls**

CREATIVE & PRODUCTION TEAM

Lead artist (composer, director):	Nwando Ebizie
Assistant Director:	Jennifer Muteteli
Experience Dramaturg:	Stephanie Singer
Deaf expression lead:	Chisato Minamimura
Choreographer:	Krystal S. Lowe
Video & captions designer:	SR Readman
Creative Technical Director:	Tom Richards
Producer:	Emily Moore
Executive Producer:	Bridget Rennie
Artistic Advisor:	Frederic Wake-Walker

Commissioned & co-produced by Mahogany Opera

CAST

Principal performers to include: Cevanne Horrocks-Hopayian, Yfat Soul Zisso, Chisato Minamimura, Grace Nyandoro, Chisara Agor



MAHOGANY OPERA

We're now launching an open call to find a set & costume designer for the production. The designer role is part of Mahogany Opera's Jerwood Opera Designer's Award programme.

WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We are looking for a designer who

- has a distinctive style and inventive approach
- has experience designing set and costumes for performance
- is interested in integrating access into performance
- is committed to working to Theatre Green Book baseline standard or above
- would benefit from mentoring and career support (for any reason)

We value diverse perspectives and would like to receive applications from a broad range of artists, including disabled and neurodivergent people. We are committed to making these opportunities as inclusive and accessible as possible, including – but not only – by budgeting for access costs.

SCHEDULE

June 2026	White card meeting
Early July 2026	Design presentation
Late July 2026	Sign off designs
Late August 2026	Costume fittings in Leeds
14-20 September	Studio Rehearsals in London
21-24 September	Tech week at Stone Nest
25-27 September	Premiere performances at Stone Nest
3 October	Performances at Howard Assembly Room, Leeds
7 October	Performance Barrow Town Hall

FEES

The fee for the project is £3,310 (+VAT if applicable) All travel and accommodation will be covered during the project.



MAHOGANY OPERA

HOW TO APPLY

To apply please submit:

- EITHER a written statement, no more than one side of A4 (c. 500 words) OR a video/audio recording of up to 3 minutes explaining your practice and what interests you about this project
- A CV
- A portfolio with links to at least two projects or pieces of work you've been part of that help evidence your working style and methods. This could be video, or other forms of documentation e.g. websites, photos, press.
- An access rider, or details of any access requirements, if applicable

Please upload your documents to this [Google Form](#) by **9am on Wednesday 15 April**. To enable us to monitor the diversity of the candidates we are attracting, we also ask all applicants to complete our anonymous diversity monitoring form; this can be done online here: <https://forms.gle/yDXUtGtE6wGQt8eC6>

Following the submission deadline:

- We will make a shortlist, and notify all applicants by the end of Friday 24 April.
- Interviews with designers will take place in early May in London / online
- Some travel bursaries are available.

MORE INFORMATION

The piece draws on Nwando's exploration of Hildegard as viewed through a Neurodivergent Afrofuturist lens. Hildegard (1098–1179) was an abbess, composer, visual artist, writer and mystic whose visions were captured in music and illuminated manuscripts. *Ordo Virtutum* stages a battle between the Devil and the Virtues for the soul of Anima. Our text weaves Hildegard's words with Nwando's dreamlike association with a scene from Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. The aim is to create a ritualistic journey from intimacy to ecstatic vision, reflecting Hildegard's vivid sensory descriptions and Nwando's Visual Snow syndrome, which produces halos, static, auras and glowing lines. These shifting sensations shape the visual world of the work.

The project advances Mahogany Opera's mission to expand what opera can be and who it is for, countering elitist perceptions by creating inclusive experiences for artists and audiences—particularly Black, neurodivergent and disabled communities. It aligns with our wider interest in reimagining radicals and rituals of the past through contemporary practice, as seen in works such as *Sky in a Small Cage* (inspired by Rumi) and new projects inspired by biblical stories, French baroque and medieval mystery plays.

About Nwando Ebizie

Nwando Ebizie a British-Nigeran multi-disciplinary artist; a constellation point for a spectrum of multidisciplinary works that call for RADICAL change.



She challenges her audience to question their perceived realities through art personas, experimental theatre, neuroscience, music and African diasporic ritualistic dance. Carving out her own particular strand of Afrofuturism, she combines research into the neuroscience of perception (inspired by her own neurodiversity) and an obsession with science fiction with a ritualistic live art practice.

Works include her immersive sensory environment *Distorted Constellations*, her pop persona Lady Vendredi (a blaxploitation heroine from another dimension!) and the building of her long-term operatic experience, *Hildegard: Visions*. This award winning work has toured across the world. She has performed in Tokyo (Bonobo), Rio de Janeiro (Tempo Festival), Berlin (Chalet), Latvia (Baltais Fligelis Concert Hall) and Zurich (Blok) as well as across the UK from Home MCR to the Barbican and Southbank Centre.

About Mahogany Opera

Mahogany Opera is a leading commissioner and producer of new opera and music theatre. We work across the UK and internationally. Mahogany Opera exists to unlock creative expression, reflect diverse perspectives, and spark human connection. Our mission is to create opportunities to make and experience boundary-pushing, inclusive new work.

We are committed to developing diverse artists and audiences through three programmes:

New Works – developing, commissioning and producing new staged works with a wide range of artists and organisations

Snappy Operas – award-winning participatory young people’s programme

Meet Me @ Mahogany – discussions, events & workshops exploring & opening up the process of making new work.

Website: www.mahoganyopera.co.uk
Instagram: [@mahoganyopera](https://www.instagram.com/mahoganyopera)
Facebook: [@MahoganyOpera](https://www.facebook.com/MahoganyOpera)
BlueSky: [@mahoganyopera.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/mahoganyopera.bsky.social)
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Ecstasy of the Virtues is supported by:

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