



For Immediate Release



"Timberbrit" photo by Timothy Andres

SAVING BRITNEY SPEARS
FIRESTARTER PRODUCTIONS AND INCUBATOR ARTS PROJECT PRESENT
JACOB COOPER'S NEW OPERA "TIMBERBRIT"
AT ST. MARK'S CHURCH IN-THE-BOWERY
NOVEMBER 18-20, 8PM

What happens when Britney Spears re-encounters Justin Timberlake in her darkest hour? The "when" is fictional; the encounter, operatic, with the imagined meeting unfolding in a new two-character musical production, "Timberbrit," by 30 year-old composer Jacob Cooper. The opera will be presented by FireStarter Productions and the Incubator Arts Project at St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, November 18, 19 and 20 at 8pm.

Creatively connecting the spirit of the melodramatic plots and emotional excess associated with traditional opera to the equally torrid dramas that surround the lives of celebrities, Cooper's Timberlake unexpectedly re-enters Spears's life at her last concert. In his attempt to rescue the flawed heroine from her suicidal love-affair with the paparazzi, Timberlake offers her a new life. Instead, the pop diva chooses the love of her audience.

Inspired by the long, extended arias of dying operatic heroines, Cooper applied "time-stretch" techniques to Spears and Timberlake's music. By using digital audio software to slow down the songs, perky hits such as "Baby One More Time" take on ironic new meaning and tragic resonance. Cooper, fascinated by the dramatic changes in mood, then created his

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own score for the imagined happenings, capitalizing on the grandiosity with which the drastic elongation of the sounds echo the prolonged sadness of Spears's slow-moving downfall.

The role of Britney Spears is performed by Mellissa Hughes, and that of Justin Timberlake by Ted Hearne. Cooper, Hughes and Hearne are all graduates of the Yale School of Music. The opera is directed by 29-year-old Jaime Castañeda. Crafted to retain the vernacular of Spears's music, the new lyrics are by Yuka Igarashi.

Musicians include James Moore on guitar, Joseph Magar on bass, Ron Wiltrout on drums and composer Jacob Cooper on keyboards and laptop. Video design is by SWITCH Pictures.

Ticketing info: November 18-20 / 8pm Curtain / Tickets - General \$15 - Student \$10
Purchase in advance at <http://www.incubatorarts.org>
Also available by calling TheaterMania at 212-352-3101. *Cash only at the door.*
Incubator Arts Project (inside St. Mark's Church) • 131 East 10th Street (at 2nd Ave.)
L to First or Third Ave; R, W to Broadway/8th St.; 6 to Astor Place; N,Q, 4, 5 to Union Sq.

INTRODUCING A NEW GENERATION OF ARTISTS

Jacob Cooper's diverse compositions have earned him a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Morton Gould Award from ASCAP and a CAP Grant from the American Music Center. He has held fellowships and residencies at the Bang on a Can Summer Institute, the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Atlantic Center for the Arts. His music has been performed by ensembles across the continent, including the JACK Quartet, the NOW Ensemble and the Minnesota Orchestra, and at concert series including Wordless Music at the Miller Theater in New York and the International Festival of Arts and Ideas in New Haven, CT. Cooper has also recently experimented with visual media, and in September, his video "Commencer Une Autre Mort" was shortlisted for the YouTube/Guggenheim Biennial. He is a doctoral candidate in music composition at the Yale School of Music. For more information, visit <http://www.jacobcoopermusic.com>

Jaime Castañeda, 29, has directed at The Old Globe in San Diego, American Theater Company, Perseverance Theatre, INTAR, Harold Clurman Theater Company, Summer Play Festival 05, 45 Bleecker, hotINK Festival, DirectorFest, Amphibian Stage Productions, Circle Theatre, and FireStarter Productions, where he is currently the producing Artistic Director. He has also assistant directed productions at the Atlantic Theater Company, Cincinnati

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Playhouse in the Park, Center Theatre Group and the recent revival of "Speed the Plow" on Broadway. Jaime is the recipient of a Drama League fall fellowship, a Princess Grace Award and a TCG New Generations grant. He currently works on the artistic staff of the Atlantic Theater Company, and he is an ensemble member at American Theater Company in Chicago. Castañeda received an MFA in Directing from the University of Texas at Austin.

Soprano **Mellissa Hughes**, 30, has worked closely with contemporary composers Julia Wolfe, Michael Gordon, David Lang, Steve Reich and Neil Rolnick and has premiered works by Caleb Burhans, Missy Mazzoli, Ted Hearne, Jacob Cooper, Matt Marks and Frederick Rzewski. Recently, Hughes was invited to be an Artist in the Carnegie Hall Dawn Upshaw and Donnacha Dennehy Professional Training Workshop. She has performed Mozart's "Vespers" and "Requiem" under the baton of Sir Neville Mariner, Handel's "Dixit Dominus" with Sir David Willcocks and the role of Dido in "Dido and Aeneas" under the direction of Andrew Lawrence-King. Future engagements include Steve Reich's "Music for 18," "Proverbs" and "Tehillum" with SIGNAL, and "Shelter" a video opera by Bang on a Can composers Michael Gordon, Julia Wolfe and David Lang. Hughes has recorded for Nonesuch, Cantaloupe and Naxos Records, and she performs regularly with ensembles Alarm Will Sound, The Wordless Music Series, Clarion Music Society, Newspeak, Vox Vocal Ensemble, Signal, The Long Count and Trinity Wall Street. Hughes holds degrees from Westminster Choir College in Princeton and Yale University. Performances this season include concerts in Moscow with the Mark Morris Dance Group, soloist with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, a recording with Cantaloupe Records, Alarm Will Sound and Louis Andriessen's "De Staat" conducted by John Adams. For more information, visit <http://mellissahughes.com>

Ted Hearne, 28, is a composer, conductor and performer of new music. His work "Katrina Ballads" is the recipient of the 2009 Gaudeamus Prize in composition and was recently released on New Amsterdam Records. Hearne's music has been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, Calder Quartet, The Knights and New York City Opera; heard at the MATA Festival, Bang on a Can Marathon, Carlsbad Music Festival and (Le) Poisson Rouge's Sleeping Giant; and commissioned by Chicago's Third Coast Percussion, San Francisco's Volti, Charleston's New Music Collective, Newspeak, Huntsville Symphony, Albany Symphony and Ensemble ACJW. Hearne is the artistic director of Yes is a World and resident conductor of Red Light New Music. He has served as music director for premieres of works by Michael Gordon and David Lang, and he has recently conducted programs with ICE and Australia's Opera IHOS. Hearne received the 2008 Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, was an artist in residence at the MacDowell Colony in Fall 2009 and recently completed collaborations with composer J.G. Thirlwell and renowned filmmaker Bill

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Morrison. Upcoming commissions include works for DITHER Electric Guitar Quartet, Toomai String Quintet and a new work for Yale Glee Club and Yale Symphony Orchestra to premiere at Carnegie Hall in April 2011. For more information, visit <http://tedhearne.com>

Yuka Igarashi, 30, has an MFA in Writing from Columbia University. She has taught at Columbia, Parsons the New School for Design, and Marywood University. Her short stories have been published in *Quick Fiction* and *Gigantic*. She currently lives in London.

ABOUT THE INCUBATOR ARTS PROJECT

The Incubator Arts Project supports independent, experimental performing artists through a series of programs aimed at offering production opportunities and guidance with long-term growth and artistic sustainability. Its programs primarily support world premieres of original work and also include a concert series, work in progress opportunities and artist salons and roundtables.

The Incubator Arts Project grew out of the Incubator, a project of the Ontological-Hysterical Theater. In 2010, the Ontological-Hysterical Theater announced that it would leave its permanent home, St. Mark's Church, and that the Incubator would take over the space and operate year-round.

Beginning in 1993, the Ontological-Hysterical Theater, in addition to its primary support of the work of Richard Foreman, opened its doors to emerging, independent artists. Since 1993 the emerging artists program at the Ontological took many forms, including the Obie-winning Blueprint Series for emerging directors. In 2005, the OHT reorganized the programs under the name INCUBATOR, creating a series of linked programs to provide young theater artists with resources and support to develop process-oriented, original theatrical productions. By 2010, the program had quadrupled in size, involving a range of artists and increased support. The programs included the centerpiece Residency program for premieres, two annual music festivals, a regular concert series, a serial work-in-progress program called Short Form, and roundtables and salons aimed at keeping Incubator artists involved year-round. In May 2010, the Incubator received an OBIE grant.

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To listen to an NPR interview with Jacob Cooper, please visit:
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=111495732>

For further information, visit:
<http://www.timberbrit.com> and <http://www.firestarterproductions.org>

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