



**Brooklyn Public Library Presents the 2020 Spring Season
Including the Launch of the *28th Amendment Project*,
Curated Lectures, Performances, and Exhibitions with
Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz,
Best-Selling Author Anand Giridharadas, and
Acclaimed Choreographer Bill T. Jones**

2020 Season Highlights Include:

- ***28th Amendment Project***, a season-long series of town hall meetings held at library branches, high schools, and prisons to discuss, debate, and propose the next amendment to the United States Constitution—crowd-sourced from the Brooklyn community
- Nobel laureate **Joseph Stiglitz**, *New York Times* best-selling author **Anand Giridharadas**, and Project Syndicate podcast host **Elmira Bayrasli** take a deep look at the widening inequality in the United States
- Choreographer, director, and author **Bill T. Jones** delivers the fifth BPL-commissioned *Message from the Library*
- ***In Praise of Failure***, a season-long exploration of failure as a generative force with BPL’s Creatives-in-Residence in partnership with **William Kentridge**’s Centre for the Less Good Idea
- ***Stars Down to Earth***, an exhibition featuring work by **Dario Robleto** and BPL’s Katowitz Radin Artist-in-Residence **Mary Mattingly** focused on ecological revitalization
- The return of Library favorites—*A Night of Philosophy and Ideas*, *Classical Interludes*, *LitFilm*, and the spring semester of *University Open Air*

Brooklyn, NY – January 30, 2019 – During this politically momentous year, Brooklyn Public Library (BPL), one of the largest library systems in the country, today announced its 2020 **BPL Presents** spring season. Comprised of a series of free cultural and civic programs with leading authors, artists, and community members at its core, the 2020 BPL Presents spring season expands on the Library’s role as a convener and forum for the nearly 2.7 million residents of Brooklyn to explore issues of local, national, and international importance, including social and climate justice.

“This spring, as our country and community engage in discussions of national importance, the Library is committed to facilitating these conversations and providing speakers, resources, and spaces for Brooklynites to tackle issues ranging from the creative process to the state of our democracy,” said **Linda**

E. Johnson, President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library. “We are eager to present a courageous and relevant group of writers, artists, and leaders this season.”

BPL continues to redefine libraries as centers for ideas and exploration through its more than 60,000 free programs each year. Throughout the spring, BPL Presents will host conversations with award-winning authors, artists, and thinkers—including Nobel laureate **Joseph Stiglitz**, progressive thought-leader **Anand Giridharadas**, foreign policy expert **Elmira Bayrasli**, and lauded choreographer **Bill T. Jones**—along with poetry events, a weekend of concerts by emerging composers, and more.

“This season we are continuing to work with leading thinkers across disciplines to collectively learn from society’s shortcomings and forge a future that is more sensible, transparent, and collaborative,” said **László Jakab Orsós, BPL’s Vice President of Arts and Culture.** “Through major programs like the *28th Amendment Project* and *In Praise of Failure*, we hope to bring together communities from across the borough—and beyond—to explore what it means to confront society’s failures and bring about radical change together.”

Following BPL’s fall 2019 program *‘Til Victory is Won*, which commemorated the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first slave ship to North America, BPL will launch **28th Amendment Project** in spring 2020. This five-month series of town hall meetings is designed to create safe forums for Brooklyn residents to collectively discuss, debate, and propose a 28th amendment to the Constitution of the United States, furthering BPL’s commitment to civic engagement and education, and to listening to the voices of those who have been historically disenfranchised from equal political participation.

Taking place at library branches, high schools, and prisons throughout Brooklyn and the greater New York area, *28th Amendment Project* will work with artists, writers, journalists, and activists to lead town hall meetings across the borough. Later in the year “framers” who have been identified and trained by members of the ACLU, the project’s legal advisor, will workshop, edit, and compose a written draft that crystallizes the public sentiments captured in the town halls. The final crowd-sourced text will be printed and distributed at all BPL branches and other public institutions ahead of the November 2020 elections, offering the community an opportunity to reflect on concerns and hopes for the future at this critical time in history.

On February 1, BPL’s celebrated sundown-to-sunrise intellectual marathon, ***A Night of Philosophy and Ideas***, returns with the theme “to live.” Presented in partnership with the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, the 12-hour event will feature more than 50 lectures and performances by guests, including Nobel Prize-winning economist Esther Duflo, composer and multimedia artist DJ Spooky, and *Big Bang Theory* television producer Eric Kaplan. Full details of *A Night of Philosophy and Ideas* may be found [here](#).

University Open Air (UOA), BPL and Prospect Park Alliance’s forum for foreign-born scholars to share their knowledge and experience with fellow community members—will be taken indoors. For two weeks beginning on February 24, patrons can participate in free classes focusing on African women writers, biodiversity conservation, Chinese poetry, and the intersection of Italian and Albanian culture, taught by professors from countries around the world.

A venue for collaboration and experimentation, the Library will explore the creative process across its dynamic series of programs including *In Praise of Failure*, presented in partnership with artist William Kentridge’s Johannesburg-based art incubator The Centre for the Less Good Idea. As part of *In Praise of Failure*, the inaugural cohort of **BPL Creatives-in-Residence**—who practice disciplines as varied as data

visualization, video and performance art, and architecture—will delve deeper into the creative process and explore the value of failure as a generative force through interdisciplinary workshops and public programs for the duration of the spring, culminating in a final performance and exhibition in April 2020.

Award-winning choreographer, dancer, and author **Bill T. Jones** will deliver BPL's biannual *Message from the Library* on Sunday, April 5. The BPL-commissioned address convenes diverse voices in the Library's safe space to have meaningful dialogue about the most precarious issues of the day.

Ahead of the opening of the Greenpoint Library and Environmental Education Center in 2020, BPL will host a range of programs for adults and children on climate change at Central Library as part of its ongoing Green Series, a forum for presentations by innovators in environmental conservation and understanding. This spring, the Green Series will include workshops with BPL's Katowitz Radin Artist-in-Residence **Mary Mattingly**—exploring the myriad approaches to confronting the climate crisis.

Throughout the upcoming year, BPL Presents will continue its ongoing innovative Library-produced programming, including the 13th season of *Classical Interludes*, which provides free access to professional-caliber chamber music including Sybarite5 and Cassatt String Quartet with special guest Peter Weitzner; and in March, the return of **LitFilm** festival.

For more information on events and ticketing, please visit: <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/bpl-presents>

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY 2020 SPRING SEASON

* Please note these events and programs are part free and take place at Central Library except where noted *

Stars Down to Earth: Mary Mattingly & Dario Robleto

Exhibition: Now through March 13, 2020

Pairing two artists who are deeply engaged in interdisciplinary work as citizen scientists, artist ambassadors, and ethicists, *Stars Down to Earth* juxtaposes Mattingly's living sculpture and *nature morte* photographs of the mining and gas industry with Robleto's intricate sculptures comprised of fossils and natural artifacts. The exhibition will be accompanied by artist talks and intensive public workshops on ecology. *Stars Down To Earth: Mary Mattingly & Dario Robleto* is curated by Cora Fisher, Curator of Visual Art Programming. The exhibition is made possible by the Katowitz Radin Endowment and programming is realized in partnership with the Prospect Park Alliance and More Art.

28th Amendment Project

Ongoing through November 2020

Locations to be announced

From February to June, BPL's *28th Amendment Project*, a series of town hall meetings held at library branches, high schools, and prisons throughout Brooklyn and the greater New York area will create forums for Brooklyn to collectively discuss, debate, and propose a new amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Notes from the town halls will be combined into a final text which will be published in early

October 2020. Ahead of the election, *28th Amendment Project* offers us an opportunity to reflect on our concerns and hopes for the future at this critical time in history.

A Night of Philosophy & Ideas 2020

Saturday, February 1–Sunday, February 2, 7 p.m.–7 a.m.

A Night of Philosophy and Ideas is a sunset-to-sunrise marathon bringing the public together with philosophers, authors, artists, and musicians from around the world for 12 hours of debate, discussion, and performance in what is one of Brooklyn’s largest and most energetic events. BPL’s fourth edition of *A Night of Philosophy* will feature more than 50 talks and performances at BPL’s historic Central Library on Grand Army Plaza, with speakers ranging from Nobel Prize-winning economist Esther Duflo to “Big Bang Theory” television writer Eric Kaplan, and performances including a set by DJ Spooky and a routine by French juggler Jérôme Thomas. *A Night of Philosophy* provides a rare opportunity to stay up late, learn radical new ideas, debate the issues of the day, and to be inspired by people from every walk of life.

Classical Interludes: BPL Chamber Players

Sunday, February 9, 4 p.m.

This edition of BPL Chamber Players brings together acclaimed violists Ayane Kozasa and Melissa Reardon, and cellists Raman Ramakrishnan and Paul Wiancko for a performance of works by Wiancko, Judd Greenstein, and others. BPL Chamber Players is a world class chamber music series, free of charge to the public. This concert was curated by Peter Weitzner.

Review Panel

Tuesday, February 11, 7 p.m.

Leading art critics join moderator David Cohen, editor and publisher of *artcritical*, in a lively debate about current exhibitions around the five boroughs.

Classical Interludes: “Echoes of Rhythm” - A Tribute to Randy Weston

Sunday, February 16, 4 p.m.

Classical Interludes: “Echoes of Rhythm” is a tribute to the late pianist and composer Randy Weston, a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master and Brooklyn resident. For “Echoes of Rhythm,” Weston’s long-term collaborators Min Xiao-Fen, Maalam Hassan Benjaafar, and Alex Blake will perform interpretations of his music in addition to compositions he inspired.

Brooklyn Poets Copresents *Three Poets Reading*: Roberto Carlos Garcia, Shira Erlichman, and Patricia Smith

Thursday, February 20, 7 p.m.

BPL Presents and Brooklyn Poets copresent “Three Poets Reading,” featuring Shira Erlichman, Brooklyn-based author of *Odes to Lithium* and *Be/Hold*; Roberto Carlos Garcia, author of *black/Maybe* and *Melancolía*; and Patricia Smith, Pulitzer Prize finalist and author of more than eight books of poetry including *Incendiary Art* and *Shoulda Been Jimi Savannah*. The Brooklyn Poets Reading Series pairs emerging and established artists from Brooklyn and beyond and is committed to supporting poets from underrepresented communities.

Green Series: Artist Talk with Mary Mattingly

Thursday, February 20, 2020, 6:30-8 p.m.

As part of the exhibition *Stars Down to Earth: Mary Mattingly & Dario Robleto*, ecological artist Mary Mattingly will give a talk that explores the notion of “the commons” as it has informed her artistic practice and her ways of engaging with citizens through public art projects. Mattingly argues that ecology is the original commons, the basis and ultimate standard of relational and thoroughly interdependent life systems. How can we learn from ecology ways to improve the contemporary commons—be it public or civic space or the commons of knowledge? And what aspects of biological life are currently under threat in our public sphere?

Ninth Annual 90-Second Newbery Film Festival

Saturday, February 22, 1 p.m.

BPL presents the ninth annual 90-Second Newbery Film Festival, an annual video contest in which young filmmakers produce creative short films that capture the entire stories of Newbery-winning books in about 90 seconds. The screening is hosted by children's authors James Kennedy (*The Order of Odd-Fish*) and Newbery Honor winner Rita Williams-Garcia (*One Crazy Summer*).

Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz and Anand Giridharadas in conversation with Elmira Bayrasli

Tuesday, February 25, 2020, 7:30-9 p.m.

In a live recording of *Project Syndicate's* “Opinion Has It” podcast, Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz, *The New York Times* bestselling author Anand Giridharadas, and host and Foreign Policy Interrupted co-founder Elmira Bayrasli take a deep look at the widening inequality in the United States, and ask which policy proposals advanced by the 2020 Democratic candidates best address it. Join BPL for a discussion with Stiglitz and Giridharadas, just before the Democratic candidates for president head into Super Tuesday.

University Open Air

February 24-March 7

Locations to be Announced

Following a successful first semester, *University Open Air* (UOA)—a space for foreign-born scholars to share their knowledge and experience with fellow community members—will return for a second semester in February. The public are invited to take free courses in a variety of academic subjects. In contrast to its summer counterpart, the winter semester of UOA will take place indoors at locations to be announced.

Classical Interludes: Carnegie Hall Citywide Concert Series – David Krakauer and Kathleen Tagg *Breath + Hammer*

Sunday, March 1, 4 p.m.

Breath + Hammer blends together influences of world music, jazz, classical, experimental techniques, and electronics to augment the traditional sounds of the clarinet and piano. A unique collaboration between clarinetist David Krakauer and pianist Kathleen Tagg, *Breath + Hammer* takes arrangements of “simple songs” by composers as diverse as New-York based visionary John Zorn, Syrian clarinetist Kinan Azmeh,

and Cuban percussionist Roberto Rodríguez, as well as original compositions by Krakauer and Tagg to create a hybrid art form that bridges the cultures of the past and looks towards the future.

Thinking Through Music: Composer David Lang and ETHEL Quartet

Tuesday, March 10, 2020, 7:30 p.m.

Composer David Lang and members of string quartet ETHEL will join to discuss the creative and collaborative nature of composer–ensemble relationships. Lang, a professor of music composition at the Yale School of Music and artist-in-residence at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York’s legendary music collective Bang on a Can. ETHEL, part of BPL’s inaugural Creatives-in-Residence program, is comprised of violist Ralph Farris, cellist Dorothy Lawson, violinist Kip Jones, and violinist Corin Lee and invigorates the contemporary music scene with exuberance, intensity, imaginative programming, and exceptional artistry.

Green Series: Make Seed Sculptures with Mary Mattingly

Thursday, March 12, 2020, 4 p.m.

In conjunction with the exhibition *Stars Down to Earth: Mary Mattingly & Dario Robleto*, children 8 years and older are invited to join BPL’s Katowitz Radin Artist-in-Residence Mary Mattingly and create their own seed sculptures. BPL’s Green Series programs provide a forum for presentations by innovators in environmental conservation and understanding, and this program invites children to learn about plants that aid in water purification and water remediation techniques.

Classical Interludes: Cassatt String Quartet with Guest Peter Weitzner, Double Bass

Sunday, March 15, 4 p.m.

The Cassatt String Quartet was the first quartet chosen for Juilliard’s Young Artists Quartet Program. Since then, they have performed at New York’s Alice Tully Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Tanglewood Music Theater, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, and the Beijing Central Conservatory in China. Named three times to Alex Ross’ 10 Best Classical Recordings of the Year in *The New Yorker* magazine, the Cassatt String Quartet have performed on the Library of Congress’ matched quartet of Stradivarius instruments and performed the complete Beethoven Quartet cycle three times at the University at Buffalo. This concert was curated by Peter Weitzner as part of BPL Chamber Players.

LitFilm

March 17–22

In the third edition of LitFilm, BPL’s popular film festival celebrating the written word, audience members will get an inside look at the private lives and artistic processes of the world’s greatest writers and literary figures, including Toni Morrison, Ursula K. Le Guin, N. Scott Momaday, and others. Additional details to be announced at a later date.

Classical Interludes: Sybarite5

Sunday, March 29, 4 p.m.

Equal parts passion, grit, and musical ecstasy, Sybarite5 is an intoxicating cocktail of post-genre musical goodness expressed through the virtuosity of violinists Sami Merdinian and Sarah Whitney; violist Angela Pickett; cellist Laura Metcalf; and bassist Louis Levitt. This exciting quintet is constantly evolving, defying categorization, and has been keeping audiences on their toes for 10 years. Always searching for new sounds and projects to bring to life, nothing is off limits. Their most recent album, *OUTLIERS*, consists entirely of new music written for them and debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Traditional Classical Chart.

In Praise of Failure: A Wider Conversation, Public Panel Review & Discussion

Tuesday, March 24, 2020, 7 p.m.

As part of *In Praise of Failure*, a season-long arts incubator project held in partnership with William Kentridge and his South African Centre for the Less Good Idea, this evening will continue deconstructing the creative process across multiple disciplines. The cohort of video and performance artists, musicians, architects, and researchers will present the ideas they've developed to a dynamic institutional audience, providing an unparalleled opportunity for exposure, while at the same time providing the audience in attendance a wider view of the creative process as it leaves the mind, studio, workshop, or lab and enters the public realm. *In Praise of Failure* is an extension of BPL's ongoing support for contemporary artists and creatives.

Message from the Library: Bill T. Jones

Sunday, April 5, 7:00 p.m.

A biannual series, *Message from the Library* convenes diverse voices in the Library's safe space to have meaningful dialogue about the most important issues of the day.

The Review Panel

Wednesday, April 15, 7 p.m.

Leading art critics join moderator David Cohen, editor and publisher of *artcritical*, in a lively debate about current exhibitions around the five boroughs.

Green Series: Aronoff, Battistoni, Cohen, and Riofrancos on *A Planet To Win*

Thursday April 16, 2019, 6:30 p.m.

For April's Green Series program, join authors Kate Aronoff, Alyssa Battistoni, Daniel Aldana Cohen, and Thea Riofrancos for a conversation about their new book *A Planet To Win* which explores the political potency and concrete first steps of a Green New Deal. In the middle of the election season, *A Planet to Win* argues that we need profound, radical change to dismantle the fossil fuel industry, build landscapes of renewable energy, and guarantee climate-friendly work, zero-carbon housing, and free public transit. In the 21st century, all politics are climate politics.

Music in Color: Eleanor Alberga

Saturday, April 25, 2020, 4 p.m.

Orchestra of St. Luke's performs at Brooklyn Public Library as part of its annual five-borough community concert tour, with free concerts designed to be as entertaining as they are educational. Since 2016, the tour has focused on OSL's *Music in Color* initiative, a multifaceted program celebrating composers of color through biographical concerts.

This season, *Music in Color* highlights the life, music, and continually evolving career of composer Eleanor Alberga. A British composer of Jamaican descent, Alberga is prolific in nearly every genre, from opera and choral works to pieces for both chamber ensemble and full orchestra. Her works are commonly played throughout Europe, with performances and recordings by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, among others. Playwright and performer Kirya Traber will join OSL to guide audiences through Alberga's story and inspiration. This concert will include the North American premiere of Alberga's *Shining Gate of Morpheus* for horn and string quartet.

Brooklyn Poets Copresents *Three Poets Reading: Ama Codjoe, John Murillo, and Rick Barot*

Thursday, April 30, 7 p.m.

BPL Presents and Brooklyn Poets copresent *Three Poets Reading*, featuring John Murillo, Brooklyn-based author of *Up Jump the Boogie*; Ama Codjoe, author of *Blood of the Air*; and Rick Barot, author of *The Darker Fall*, *Want*, and *Chord*. The Brooklyn Poets Reading Series pairs emerging and established artists from Brooklyn and beyond and is committed to supporting poets from underrepresented communities.

In Praise of Failure: Fellows Exhibition

April–May 2020

The *In Praise of Failure: Fellows Exhibition* will feature notes, drawings, diagrams, and sketches by the six Creatives-in-Residence participating in the joint BPL-Centre for the Less Good Idea initiative this spring. Works by emerging South African artists from the Johannesburg-based arts incubator The Centre for the Less Good Idea and ephemera generated during the immersive workshop sessions at BPL will be on display at BPL, providing insights into the creative process.

Classical Interludes: Brooklyn Art Song Society

Sunday, May 10, 4 p.m.

In its 10th season the Brooklyn Art Song Society, a company dedicated to the vast repertoire of poetry set to music, will perform some of the most well-known and beloved lieder on texts by Friedrich Rückert.

The Review Panel

Tuesday, May 12, 7 p.m.

Leading art critics join moderator David Cohen, editor and publisher of *artcritical*, in a lively debate about current exhibitions around the five boroughs.

Classical Interludes: BPL Chamber Players

Sunday, May 17, 4 p.m.

BPL Chamber Players will perform a concert of works featuring pianist Benjamin Hochman, violinist Gergana Haralampieva, violist Jessica Thompson, double bassist Peter Weitzner, and cellist Joel Noyes.

Young Composers Festival

Saturday, May 30–Sunday, May 31

From its founding, ETHEL has collaborated with and commissioned a long list of composers and musicians, recognizing the importance of being part of current compositional thought and practice, and of supporting the work of emerging artists. This festival is a continuation of this important initiative. ETHEL will perform world premiere works of early career composers Simon Brown, Sarah Goldfeather, Nailah Nombeko and Sugar Vendil.

In Praise of Failure: An Evening In Praise of Failure

Tuesday, June 2, 7 p.m.

As the concluding public program of *In Praise of Failure*, BPL's season-long arts incubator held in partnership with William Kentridge and his South African Centre for the Less Good Idea (CftLGI), Creatives-in-Residence and audience members are invited to delve deeper into the creative process and value of failure as a generative medium. CftLGI animateur Bronwyn Lace will speak about the Centre and partnership, and Creatives-in-Residence will reflect on their experience throughout the season. Original improvisatory music will be performed by Creative-in-Residence ETHEL Quartet, and audience members will be invited to respond and share experiences during a Q&A period.

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WNYC is a media partner of the 2020 BPL Presents Season.

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Media Contacts

Julie Danni / Katrina Reynolds
Resnicow and Associates

jdanni@resnicow.com / kreynolds@resnicow.com

212-671-5173 / 212-671-5184

About Brooklyn Public Library

Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) is an independent library system for the 2.5 million residents of Brooklyn. It is the sixth largest library system in the United States with 59 neighborhood libraries located throughout the borough. BPL offers free programs and services for all ages and stages of life, including a large selection of books in more than 30 languages, author talks, literacy programs, and public computers. BPL's eResources, such as eBooks and eVideos, catalog information, and free homework help, are available to customers of all ages 24 hours a day at our [website](#).