

For Immediate Release

ARTISTS OF THE AURORA
HAVE YOU SEEN MY SISTER?
INSTALLATION AT THE OPEN TUNING FESTIVAL
SATURDAY JUNE 9, 2018.
AURAL MONUMENT
MISSION HOUSE STAGE
7PM

When one woman goes missing, all of us are lost.



TUESDAY JUNE 5 2018.

On Saturday June 9, 2018 Aruna Antonella Handa and the Artists of the Aurora will be installing *Have You Seen My Sister?* a musical monument for unaccompanied voice to commemorate the missing and murdered women of Ontario at the Fifth annual Open Tuning Festival in Toronto's Seaton Village. "We are especially honoured to perform this song cycle at this free music festival," said Handa, composer of the piece and Artistic Director of Artists of the Aurora. "The daughter of the festival's founder acted as a docent at the debut of the piece at *Nuit Blanche* last year," she said. The aural monument is composed of four movements, together making up a 30-minute performance.

The musical composition, originally installed in a 12-hour version for *Nuit Blanche* Toronto 2017, is inspired by the range and textures of the human voice. In §1, the voice used to call out a missing loved one at the beginning of a search, full of optimism is contrasted with the longer plaintive notes, the stepped up urgency, and perseverance of the second voice, reminiscent of one who has been searching for some time. In §2, the names of the missing, the *Away* list, are sung out as though calling these women home. The singers are asked to draw their inspiration for their improvised melody from the name itself, giving character and shape to a name on a list. In §3, the singers ask the audience to remind them to wonder who's missing from the corridors of privilege, linking up

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these absences with the absences of the women who populate the lists. "Too often the lists of the missing and the murdered in any country are a reliable guide to the most disenfranchised people in

that country," Handa said. "In Ontario, women of Indigenous background, women of visible minority, women living in poverty and transgender women are disproportionately represented in the lists of the missing and murdered." In the fourth and final section of the composition, the names of the Gone List, those who will not be returning, are recited against a backdrop of increasingly urgent drumming as the chorus softly intones "gone, gone" like funeral bells tolling.

The Artists of the Aurora is a pan-North American collective of artists, musicians, researchers and others who have come together to collaborate on this aural monument in order to draw attention to the global issue of missing and murdered women. The artists performing the piece are vocalists based in Toronto. For this installation, they have drawn on lists online, as well as on the femicide list of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Housing to create the list of women murdered in Ontario over the past eighteen months. The Away list of the missing women was compiled from lists and articles online. Links to the lists that the Artists of the Aurora have compiled as well as those they have drawn on are available on their website.

"We originally installed a twelve hour version of this piece for Nuit Blanche Toronto. I really had no idea in creating this piece that we'd be spending so much of our time trying to create, update and validate lists of the missing and murdered," said Handa. "The fact that there is no authoritative and comprehensive list means there is no chance to analyze it and little hope of devising evidence-based strategies to reduce the incidences of violence against women," Handa said.

In the meantime, the artists perform Have You Seen My Sister? in the hope of drawing attention to the missing and murdered women here and around the world. They consider the piece part of an urgent plea for a comprehensive authoritative list of the missing and murdered women of Canada.

The Everywoman image is based on a painting by Mexico-based Canadian artist Victor Klassen. "The image captures the notion that everywoman is of the planet. She's as essential to our well being as the planet itself," Klassen said.

The musicians for the Open Tuning performance are:

Alejandra Ballon (soprano)

Aruna Antonella Handa (contralto)

Caitlin Holland (soprano)

Jennifer Wakefield (mezzo)

Raphael Roter (drums)

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