



NOBODY IS EVER MISSING

A NEW OPERA BY TIM HOLT BASED ON
THE NOVEL BY CATHERINE LACEY

*“No one is anything more than a slow event
and I knew I was not a woman but a series of
movements, not a life, but a shake...”*

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Music by Tim Holt

Libretto adapted by Tim Holt from the novel *Nobody Is Ever Missing* by Catherine Lacey (2014, Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

Duration: ca. 45 minutes

CAST

Elyria (soprano)

The “Wildebeest” (percussionist)

INSTRUMENTATION

Flute

Clarinet in Bb / Bass Clarinet

Piano

Violin 1

Violin 2

Violoncello

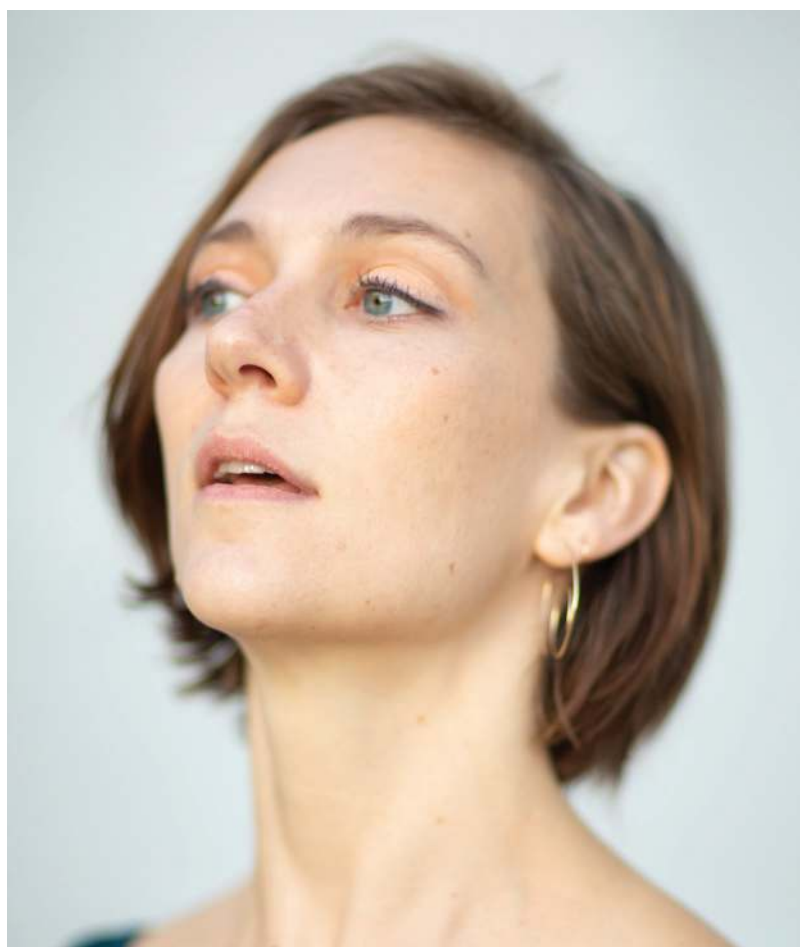
TECHNICAL INFORMATION

The music of *Nobody Is Ever Missing* is designed for flexible theatrical presentation. All instrumental parts may be performed live or via audio playback. The score is divided into 17 movements grouped into 3 parts. Other works may be performed between parts.

RIGHTS & PERMISSIONS

The copyright to the original text of *Nobody Is Ever Missing* is owned by Catherine Lacey. Text rights and permissions for any new production must be arranged and granted through agreement with The Wylie Agency (contact: Jin Auh, jauh@wylieagency.com). The music and related rights are managed exclusively by the composer.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Catherine Lacey

Catherine Lacey’s most recent work, *The Möbius Book*, is half pure fiction and half pure memory.

She is also the author of four novels: *Biography of X*, *Pew*, *The Answers*, *Nobody Is Ever Missing*, and a short story collection, *Certain American States*.

Her honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Whiting Award, a Cullman fellowship, an O. Henry, the Young Lions Fiction Award, the Brooklyn Public Library Book Prize, and an award from Lambda for Lesbian Fiction.

A second short story collection, *My Stalkers*, will appear in 2027.



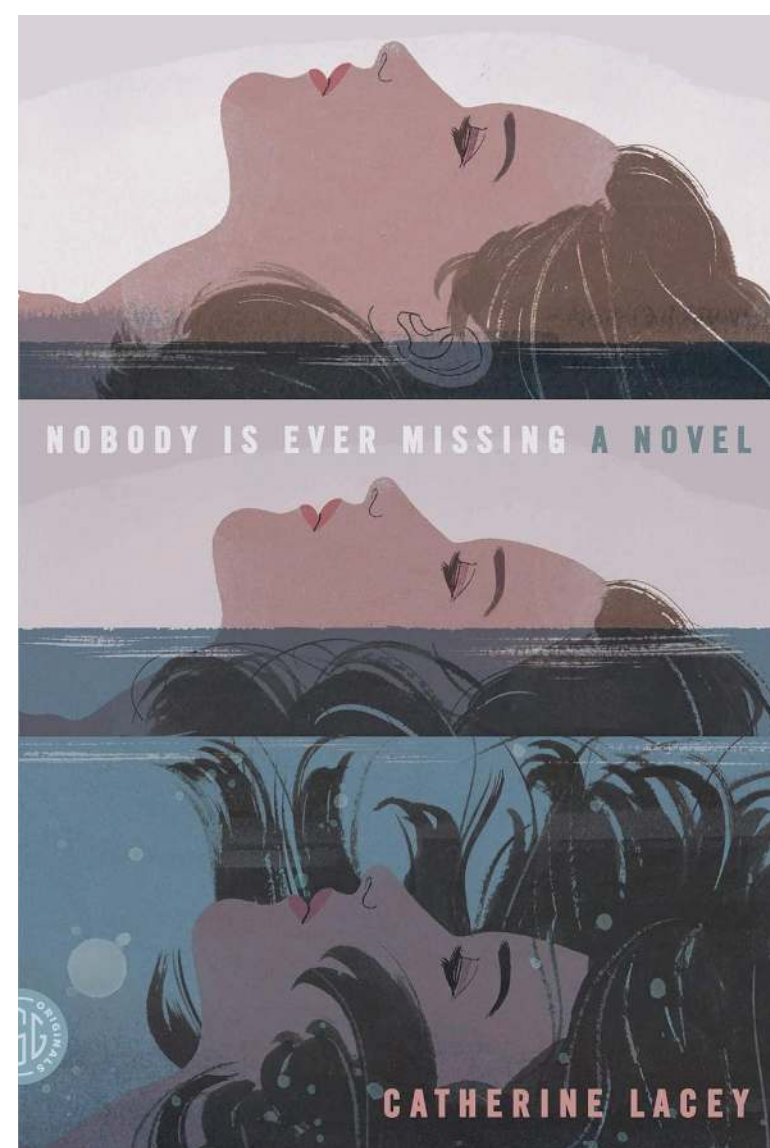
Tim Holt

A composer of terse and brittle virtuosity, Tim Holt’s music has been performed across the United States and Europe. In 2025, Mind On Fire (Baltimore) presented his opera *Nobody Is Ever Missing* in two sold-out performance runs along with his new work for vocal ensemble, *Anchorites*.

In 2024, his *Playground Poems* for solo voice premiered at the *Thrilled to Announce* Podcast Recital in New York City. In 2022, Overtone Industries (Los Angeles) selected Holt for their *Original Vision* opera workshop program, where he premiered the chamber opera *Palo Seco*.

Holt received the Rothschild Award for Music Composition from the Peabody Conservatory in 2014 and was awarded a Paderewski Prize in 2010 for his *Percussion Sextet*. He received his Doctorate of Musical Arts in Music Composition from Peabody Conservatory in 2019 and has studied with composers Michael Hersch and Edward Knight.

ABOUT THE NOVEL



In the spirit of Haruki Murakami and Amelia Gray, Catherine Lacey’s *Nobody Is Ever Missing* is full of mordant humor and uncanny insights, as Elyria waffles between obsession and numbness in the face of love, loss, danger, and self-knowledge.

Without telling her family, Elyria takes a one-way flight to New Zealand, abruptly leaving her stable but unfulfilling life in Manhattan. As her husband scrambles to figure out what happened to her, Elyria hurtles into the unknown, testing fate by hitchhiking, tacitly being swept into the lives of strangers, and sleeping in fields, forests, and public parks.

Her risky and often surreal encounters with the people and wildlife of New Zealand propel Elyria deeper into her deteriorating mind. Haunted by her sister’s death and consumed by an inner violence, her growing rage remains so expertly concealed that those who meet her sense nothing unwell. This discord between her inner and outer reality leads her to another obsession: If her truest self is invisible and unknowable to others, is she even alive?

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Nobody Is Ever Missing was originally conceived to premiere with an interstitial work by Tim Holt for SATB vocal quartet, titled “Anchorites.” This work anticipates and reflects on themes and images from the opera, however, other relevant music can also be effectively paired on a program.

Synopsis

Elyria is hitchhiking alone across New Zealand. She has left everything and everyone in her life behind her. As she spends more and more time in her own head, she eventually comes to terms with what it means to escape and the impossibility of escape from herself.

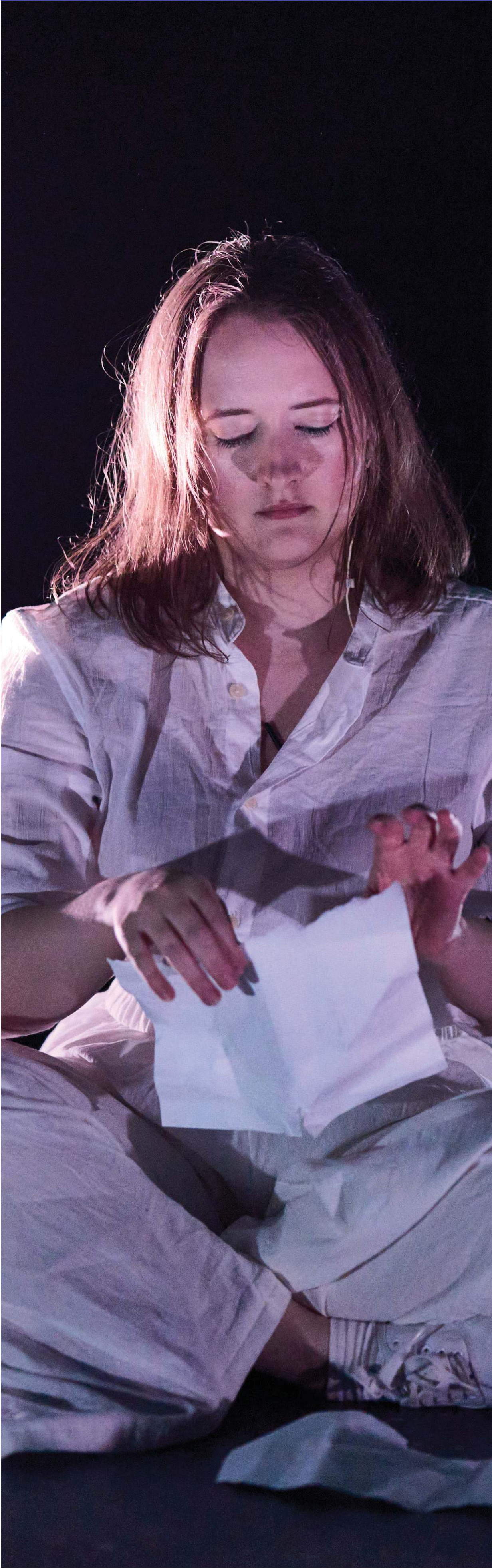
Sample Programs

- 1

Anchorites I. Tao Lin
Nobody Is Ever Missing: Part 1
Anchorites II. Julian of Norwich
Nobody Is Ever Missing: Part 2
Anchorites III. John Berryman
Nobody Is Ever Missing: Part 3
- 2

A short opera or other short dramatic work
- INTERMISSION -
Nobody Is Ever Missing – All
- 3

“She Who Sleeps With A Small Blanket” by Kevin Volans
Nobody Is Ever Missing: Part 1
“yhyhyhyhyh” by Oliver Leith
Nobody Is Ever Missing: Part 2
“Douleur me bat” by Josquin des Prez, arr. Michael Hersch
Nobody Is Ever Missing: Part 3



PERFORMANCE HISTORY



January 17 –19, 2025
The Voxel Theater
Baltimore, MD

October 3 – 5, 2025
Stony Run Park
Baltimore, MD

CREDITS

Directed by Juanita Rockwell
Technical Direction and Projection
Design by Jason Charney
Music Direction by James Young
Lighting Design by Juan Juarez
and Martin Sundiata
Scenic Design by James Raymond
Films by Margaret Rorison

Elyria: Heather Morrison
Percussion: Shelly Purdy

Gracie Carney, violins
Elizabeth Hill, piano
Peter Kibbe, cello
Stephanie Ray, flute
Jennifer Tscheulin, clarinets

Anchorites: Cameron Falby,
Kayleigh Sprouse, Kaylee Parker T.J. Callahan

Movement: Peter Redgave, Noelle Tolbert

PERFORMANCE HISTORY



Photos by Chris Ashworth and Dave Iden
The Voxel Theater, 9 W 25th Street
Baltimore, MD



PERFORMANCE HISTORY



Photos by Yvonne Galetaki and Mike Maguire
Stony Run Park, 3904 Linkwood Road
Baltimore, MD



PRESS & REVIEWS



Nobody Is Ever Missing previewed to sold out audiences over a three-night run at the Voxel Theater. Its outdoor premiere was met with similar enthusiasm, drawing crowds of one hundred-plus attendees to Stony Run Park in Baltimore. Feedback from both events praised the dream-like pacing, clarity of the text, and the inventive approach to staging.

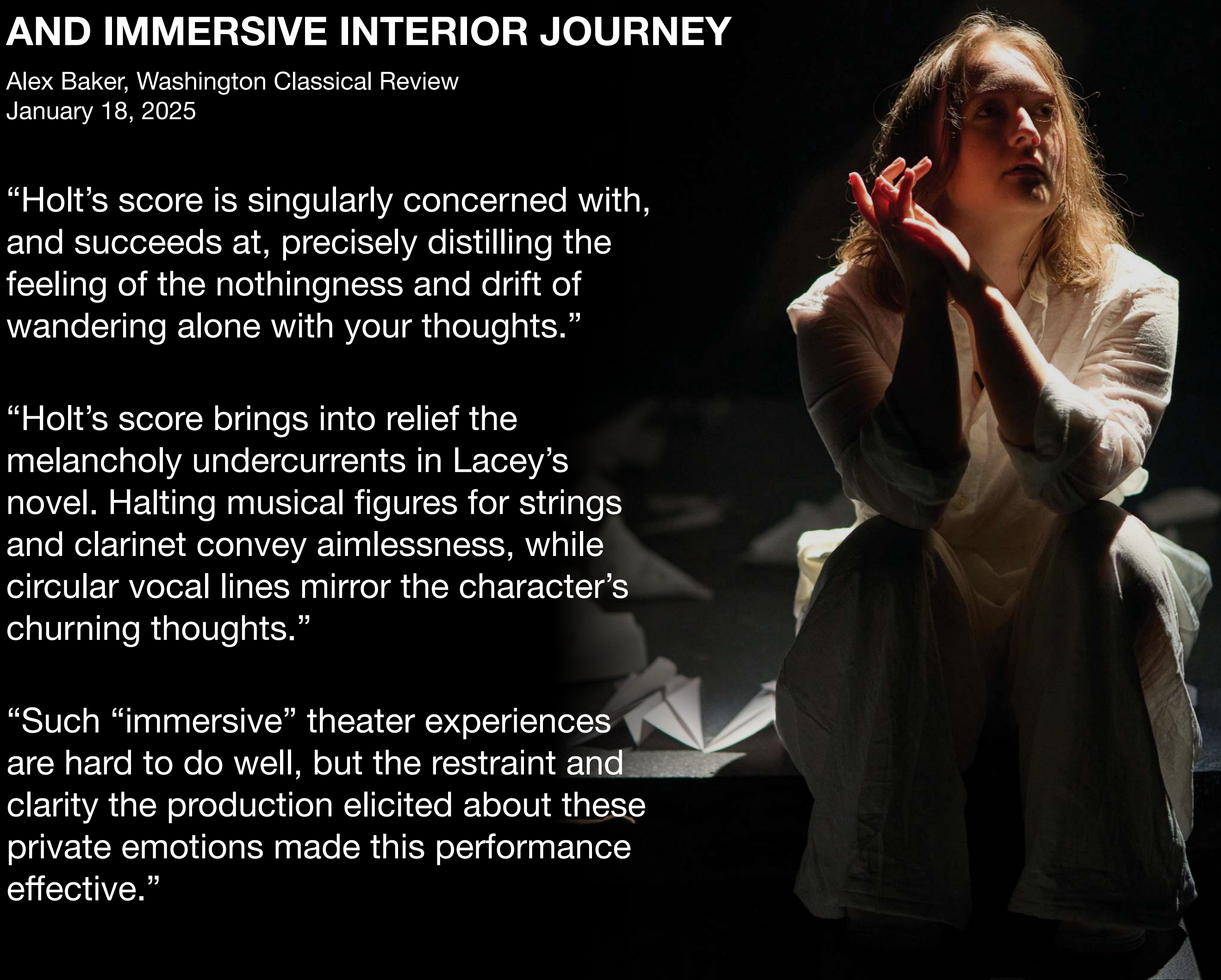
MIND ON FIRE PRESENTS A COMPELLING AND IMMERSIVE INTERIOR JOURNEY

Alex Baker, Washington Classical Review
January 18, 2025

“Holt’s score is singularly concerned with, and succeeds at, precisely distilling the feeling of the nothingness and drift of wandering alone with your thoughts.”

“Holt’s score brings into relief the melancholy undercurrents in Lacey’s novel. Halting musical figures for strings and clarinet convey aimlessness, while circular vocal lines mirror the character’s churning thoughts.”

“Such “immersive” theater experiences are hard to do well, but the restraint and clarity the production elicited about these private emotions made this performance effective.”



COMPOSER'S NOTE

I remember where I was when the opening lines of *Nobody Is Ever Missing* came to me. I was living in Houston. This was 2015. I was walking near the Spec's liquor store on Westheimer and Hilcroft. I don't remember if it was day or night.

At that time and for most of my life, I would often wander aimlessly at all hours. After first picking up Catherine's book in 2014, I connected deeply with the character of Elyria and kept her with me when I felt like going missing.

No one can more keenly trace and hew the shape of a thought better than Catherine Lacey. No one better captures the fluid banter between logic and wild instinct. The constant building up and blowing up of notions in our minds happening all the time. The opera turns these traces into sharp gestures and music obsessed with disappearing.

The music of the *Anchorites* is more modest and less concerned with being seen than *Nobody*. Dispatches from other voices who similarly divorced themselves, opting out from circumstances and society at large, plumb their loneliness for answers.

Together, all of these personal essays on solitude prove that isolation is an essential human endeavor. It alters us and seems necessary. Whether or not it is curative or injurious depends on the conditions, perhaps it depends on the day. *Anchorites* and *Nobody* were written ten years apart, and I am not the same in them. Yet this solitude is where I continue to return.

– Tim Holt

CONTACT



Media and additional informaton about *Nobody is Ever Missing* can be found at **nobodyisevermissing.com**.

For perusal score and information about staging,
contact Tim Holt at holt.tim@me.com.

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