



Song cycle Stardust explores race and tokenism in society

By [Aaron Lee](#) in [NEWS](#) [STAGE](#) [🕒](#) October 29, 2020

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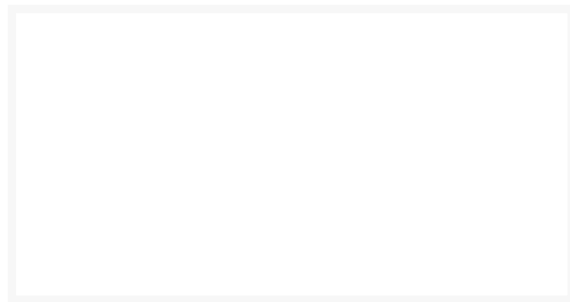
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THE FRESH LIST

A new multi-format arts production exploring race and tokenism in society will premiere online this December.

The Helios Opera will present *Stardust*, by composer **Felix Jarrar** and fantasy writer **B L Foxley**, on December 4 as a ticketed online stream. Subsequent screenings, co-hosted by a variety of affinity groups, will follow later.

Stardust is a collection of songs described as “part music video, part song cycle, and part concept album” that explores the challenges of racial identity and self-criticism, and the transformative power of nature.



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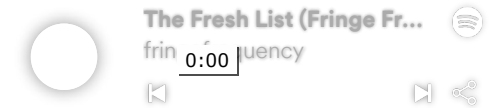
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This work is the debut stage production for British-Nigerian writer **B L Foxley**.

“Writing is my escape from reality and where I step into the worlds I create,” she told **Fringe Frequency**. “I originally wrote the poems as part of my Masters degree in Creative Writing to weave together the world I live in, the hesitance we experience within ourselves, and my love for fantasy fiction.

“*Stardust* is almost a journey into my writing process set to beautiful music. I chose the name in tribute to the first story I wrote as an eight-year-old, called *A Fallen Star*.”

The monodrama will feature soprano Victoria Davis (Washington National Opera Juneteenth Celebration). Palestinian-Sri Lankan composer Jarrar (Symphony Space, Le Poisson Rouge) will serve



- 1 Bruised Fruit
Ghostpoet 5:14
- 2 Anseo (Single Mix)
Denise Chaila, Jafaris 3:45
- 3 Blue Stars
Hatter, Ceezlin, Roxy Roberts 3:07
- 4 The Other Lover (Little Drag...
Little Dragon, Moses Sumney 4:04
- 5 BBQ Energy
Reuben James, Adam Flow... 3:06
- 6 Tomb
Xylaroo 4:31

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as music director and collaborative pianist. And John de los Santos has just been confirmed as stage director. The team members are working remotely from their respective homes in Boston, Brooklyn, Houston, and London.

Speaking about the music, Jarrar said: "I was drawn to writing *Stardust* because, in B L Foxley's text, I could see my own childhood experiences with racism relate to being my own worst enemy as a self-critical musician, and find an escape into a fantasy world with a powerful feminine figure."

When asked how it feels to see composers and performers bringing her words to life on stage, Foxley said: "I've always loved how music transcends race, gender, sexuality, and class. People connect to lyrics, drum beats, and piano notes like an organ living outside their body that they can share with everyone around them. Making music out of my poetry excites me beyond belief.

"I love that 2020 has seen so many shows live-streamed and connecting with a wider audience. It's inspiring that *Stardust* could be what introduces someone to the world of poetry, opera and theatre."

Stardust is the second offering to come out of Helios's Modular Opera Project (MOP), which was created in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The opera house is working with creatives and performers to produce work in their own homes and deliver new musical storytelling experiences to audiences around the world.

Theodora Cottarel, chief creative officer at Helios Opera, said: "When Felix proposed this project, we knew it was the right next step for MOP. We have been fans of his work for several years and we believe the future of the opera industry lies in developing and promoting the work of talented young artists from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds."

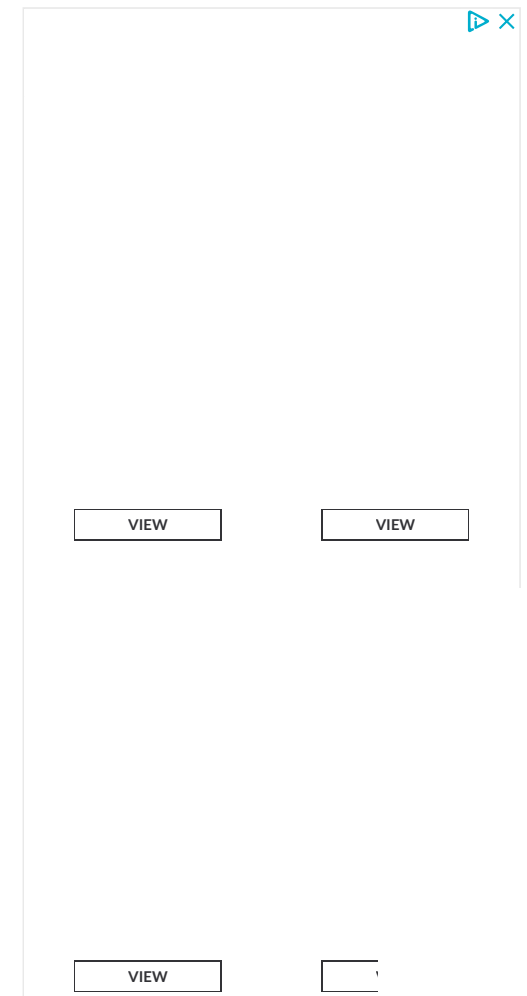
With this in mind, 10 per cent of all proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to Color of Change, the US's largest online racial justice organisation.

Stardust premieres on December 4 at 20:00 EST.

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Tickets for *Stardust* will be \$15.00 and will go on sale from November 10 via www.heliosopera.com/mop. Ten per cent of all proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to Color of Change.

Image: Helios Opera

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