

desert in



IN THE OPERATIC NEW MINISERIES “DESERT IN,” A MYSTERIOUS MOTEL IN A DESOLATE LOCATION WELCOMES CUSTOMERS DESPERATE TO RECLAIM LOST LOVES

Eight-part miniseries debuts June 3 on BLO’s streaming service, operabox.tv.

*Raviv Ullman, Anthony Michael Lopez, Jon Orsini join the cast.
Zackary Drucker joins the director team.*

*Commissioned and produced by Boston Lyric Opera.
Produced in association with Long Beach Opera.*

[First-look production and on-set photos available here.](#)

BOSTON – April 29, 2021 – “Desert in” is a groundbreaking new television miniseries that combines the talents of [eight extraordinary, award-winning composers](#) (led by Pulitzer Prize-winner **Ellen Reid**) and interlocking stories from [rising and veteran screenwriters](#) (led by lauded playwright **christopher oscar peña**), helmed by a team of directors (bringing to life a visual world imagined by opera and film director **James Darrah**).

Part supernatural love story, part dazzling long-form music video, “desert in” is driven by a blend of striking new music that ranges from lush classical to jazz, from electronic soundscape to cinematic sweep, and more. Principal filming is nearing completion in Palm Springs, Calif.; **the series premieres June 3, 2021 on BLO’s streaming service, operabox.tv.**

Co-created by Reid, peña and Darrah, “desert in” is commissioned and produced by Boston Lyric Opera, and produced in association with Long Beach Opera.

*In a mysterious motor lodge...along a desolate stretch of highway in the American desert,
customers pay for the usual amenities -- a room, a pool, a lounge.
But here, they also pay to be reunited with lost loves of all kinds...*

CASTING

With a diverse cast of actors, singers and creators, “desert in” creates a wholly new storytelling experience. On-screen actors are complemented by performers who are not seen, but whose voices are heard on the soundtrack. Some of the on-screen actors are seen singing; others create and embody characters guided by off-screen voices. The effect places the story in a dreamlike universe that’s not quite earthbound, not quite celestial.

Onscreen performers are:

- **Isabel Leonard** (the three-time Grammy Award-winning mezzo-soprano, singing and portraying the character of *Cass*);
- **Talise Trevigne** (the Grammy-nominated soprano, singing and portraying *Sunny*);
- **Justin Vivian Bond** (Tony Award-nominated actor/singer, singing and portraying *The Lounge Singer*);
- **Raviv Ullman** (Disney's "Phil of the Future," and "The Accidental Wolf" w/Kelli O'Hara and Judith Ivey, portraying *Ion*);
- **Alexander Flores** (from “The Maze Runner” film series and the upcoming sci-fi thriller "Project Dorothy," portraying *Rufus*);
- **Anthony Michael Lopez** (the film "Mapplethorpe" w/Matt Smith, portraying *Federico*);
- **Ricco Ross** (seen in the Starz series “P-Valley” and James Cameron’s “Aliens,” in portraying *Old Man/Derek*);
- **Jon Orsini** (the film "The Assistant" with Julia Garner, and forthcoming film "The Survivalist" w/Jonathan Rhys Meyers and John Malkovich, portraying *the Son*); and
- **Carlis Shane Clark** (the film “Dutch” with Jeremy Meeks, playing *The Stranger*).

Vocal performers are:

- Baritone and 2020 Glyndebourne Opera Cup winner **Edward Nelson** (singing *Ion*);
- Tony Award-winning tenor **Jesus Garcia** (singing *Rufus*);
- Renowned tenor **Alan Pingarrón** (singing *Federico*);
- Bass-baritone and 2018 Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Award **Davóné Tines** (singing *Old Man/Derek*); and
- Soprano **Brianna J. Robinson**, mezzo-soprano **Emma Sorenson**, and tenor **Neal Ferreira** (singing a ghostly Greek-chorus-like trio known as “Vapors”).

Additional details about “desert in” vocal performers are available [here](#).

DIRECTORS

The eight “desert in” episodes are helmed by four directors including:

- Opera and film director, and Long Beach Opera Artistic Director **James Darrah** (“The Fall of the House of Usher” opera film, “Breaking the Waves” opera; “Soldier Songs” opera film);
- Emmy Award-nominated producer and director **Zackary Drucker** (director, “The Lady and the Dale” on HBO Max, and producer, “Transparent” on Prime Video);
- Veteran TV writer, producer and director **Joy Kecken** (writer/co-executive producer, “Motherland: Fort Salem” on Freeform, and writer/director for HBO’s “The Wire”);
- and onscreen artist and director **Raviv Ullman** (director, “Standing Ground” documentary film).

WHERE TO WATCH “DESERT IN”

“Desert in” debuts on BLO’s operabox.tv streaming service on June 3, 2021. Operabox.tv is available at the [operabox.tv website](https://operabox.tv) and through branded apps on Apple, Google, Amazon and Roku platforms.

THE STORY OF “DESERT IN”

Told in eight episodes ranging from 10 to 20 minutes each, the story of “desert in” revolves around two couples: Cass and Sunny, the innkeepers at a remote motor lodge called the Desert Inn, who are celebrating a milestone anniversary; and new guests Ion and Rufus, who are celebrating their honeymoon. Cass and Ion harbor secrets from their lovers, and money exchanges hands to ensure everyone’s happiness.

At the heart of the Desert Inn is the shimmering, oasis-like pool, where parties take place, furtive liaisons happen, and mounting tensions have unnatural effects on the water. Among the other colorful characters who stay or work at the Inn are a witchy Lounge Singer, a mysterious handyman named Federico with secret passions of his own, and an Old Man who yearns to reconnect to his past.

Unexpected romances, shamanic rituals, and a roiling spiritual world surround the motor lodge. As the Inn’s money-for-memories scheme starts to unravel, friends and lovers become enemies, details become fuzzy, and guests check out in surprising ways. Fiery passions bring the story to an explosive end.

EPISODE DETAILS

Ep. 1: “This House is Now”

Composer: Ellen Reid
Writer: Kirsten Greenidge
Director: James Darrah

Ep. 2: “Love is Like the Sea”

Composer: Nathalie Joachim
Writer: Joy Kecken
Director: James Darrah

Ep. 3 : “Someday you’ll know...they’re calling to you too”

Composers: Ellen Reid, Vijay Iyer
Writer: A. Rey Pamatmat
Director: Zackary Drucker

Ep. 4: “A Single Man”

Composer: Emma O’Halloran
Writer: Ryan J. Haddad
Director: James Darrah

Ep. 5: “I miss you more than I remember you”

Composer: Wang Lu
Writer: christopher oscar peña
Director: Raviv Ullman

Ep. 6: “The Heart is a Lonely Hunter”

Composer: Shelley Washington
Writer: Quentin Nguyen-duy
Director: James Darrah

Ep. 7: “The Sun Also Rises”

Composer: Nico Muhly
Writer: Jesse J. Sanchez
Director: Joy Kecken

Ep. 8: “Tell me how all this, and love too, will ruin us”

Composer: Michael Abels
Writer: Roxie Perkins
Director: James Darrah

More information about “desert in” writers is available [here](#). More information about composers is [here](#).

PRODUCTION TEAM FOR “DESERT IN”

Executive Producers for “desert in” are **Bradley Vernatter**, **Esther Nelson** and **Jessica Johnson Brock** for Boston Lyric Opera. Co-Executive Producers are **Jennifer Rivera** and **James Darrah** for Long Beach Opera. Consulting Producer is **Joy Kecken**. Producer is **Theory & Practice Productions** (**Tony Shayne**, **Pranav Shah**; Assistant Producer **Kerstin Heinrich**). Associate Producer is **Bailey Costa**.

Michael Elias Thomas is the Director of Photography for “desert in.” Production Designer is **Yuki Izumihara**. Costume Designer is **Molly Irelan**. Gaffer/Lighting Designer is **Pablo Santiago**. Art Directors are **Naomi González Kahn** and **James Maloof**.

MUSIC TEAM FOR “DESERT IN”

Music Director for “desert in” is **David Angus** and Music Supervisor is **Vimbayi Kaziboni**. Audio Recording Engineer and Music Mixing by **Daniel Neumann**. Studio Recording Engineering by **Immersive Music Project**. More information about the Boston Lyric Opera orchestra is available [here](#).

FUNDING FOR “DESERT IN”

The commission of Ellen Reid for desert in was funded, in part, by OPERA America’s Opera Grants for Female Composers program, supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation and the Fromm Music Foundation, with additional commissioning support from the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts. Boston Lyric Opera received support for its 2020-2021 Season from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

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MEDIA INFORMATION

- [Photographs from the set and initial production stills from “desert in” are available here.](#)
- A trailer will be available soon.
- Interviews with “desert in” cast and creators are available.
- Screeners of the first few episodes of “desert in” will be available for review.
- **For additional details and interviews, and to receive trailer and screeners**, contact John Michael Kennedy at jmk@jmkpr.com or 212-842-1752.