

# Introduction for patrons who are Deaf or hard of hearing

~~DARK~~MATTER by Cherish Menzo/Grip & Frascati Producties (Belgium/The Netherlands)

~~DARK~~MATTER is a very visual performance, and the movement of the two performers, Cherish Menzo and Camilo Mejia Cortes, makes a powerful impression all on its own.

The show features a number of songs, all of which are performed live in the style of rap/spoken word poetry by Cherish and/or Camilo. A song texts booklet with lyrics of all the songs will be available at the theatre, and is also published on the PuSh website at <https://pushfestival.ca/darkmatter-song-texts/#> (the lyrics are published in three languages, but all songs are performed in English). The lyrics convey a strong message, and the song text booklet also contains some background information about the songs, so reading it in advance might be helpful. Most of the songs also feature a lot of repetition, so folks with varying degrees of hearing loss who have lip reading skills might benefit as they can decipher some of the words; for example, towards the end of the performance when the phrase “Homeless, Boneless, Careless, Formless” continues for several minutes.

The first song is performed by Cherish about five minutes into the show; after that, there is a long period (about 45 minutes) with no spoken dialogue, then the remaining songs all flow one after another. There is no dialogue in the performance other than the songs, but the choreography is accompanied by a soundscape featuring electronic music, mechanical/electronic sounds, and unintelligible vocal sounds including operatic singing. Some of the music includes a lot of very low tones, so the audience may be able to feel the vibration. The music and sound combine to create a powerful feeling of tension, anticipation, or foreboding, sometimes conveying a sense of discovering something unknown, possibly futuristic.

The performance begins in near silence, with a sound similar to wind blowing or the rumbling of distant machines; this sound continues for the first five minutes until shortly after the stage goes dark, after which music begins to build in volume and complexity, featuring drawn out choral sounds and unsettling instrumental tones. The soundscape continues nearly uninterrupted for the entire performance, with only a few moments of relative silence filled only by the sounds of Cherish and Camilo breathing or laughing (the laughing is amplified and distorted electronically). In one powerful scene, Camilo appears to be shouting, but no sound or spoken dialogue comes out of his mouth for the first minute or two, after which he begins to perform the song *Water Prayers*. The show ends with mechanical humming and whirring sounds that fade into the distance.