

# Blued Trees, a contemporary opera to challenge climate law, previews in Brooklyn on August 26

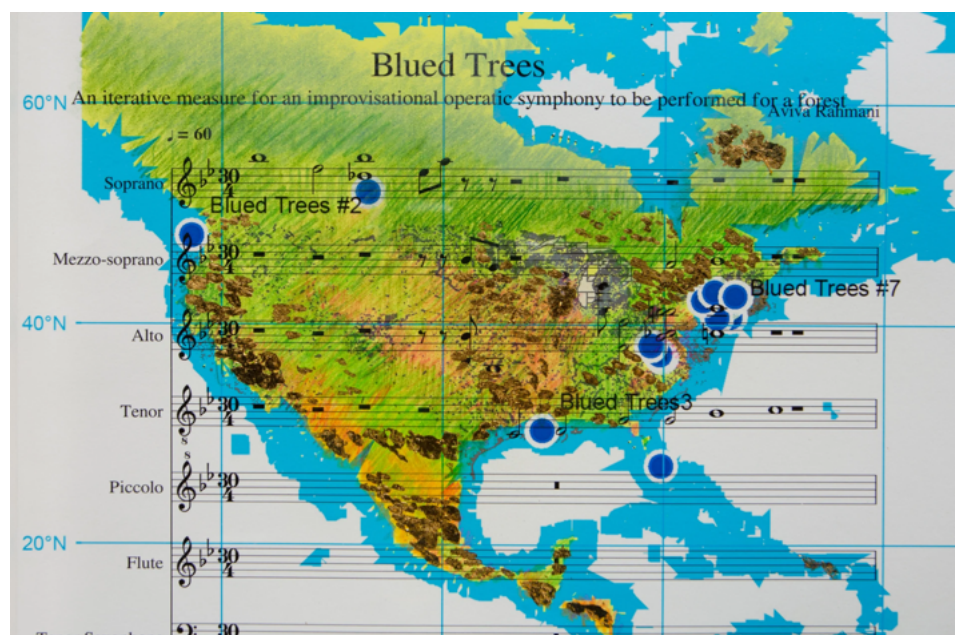
Press Release. July 31, 2023 (for immediate release)

Based on *The Blued Trees Symphony*, a copyrighted ecoart installation by Aviva Rahmani to block fracked gas pipeline construction, the opera boldly questions 21st century ethics and the law's protection of art

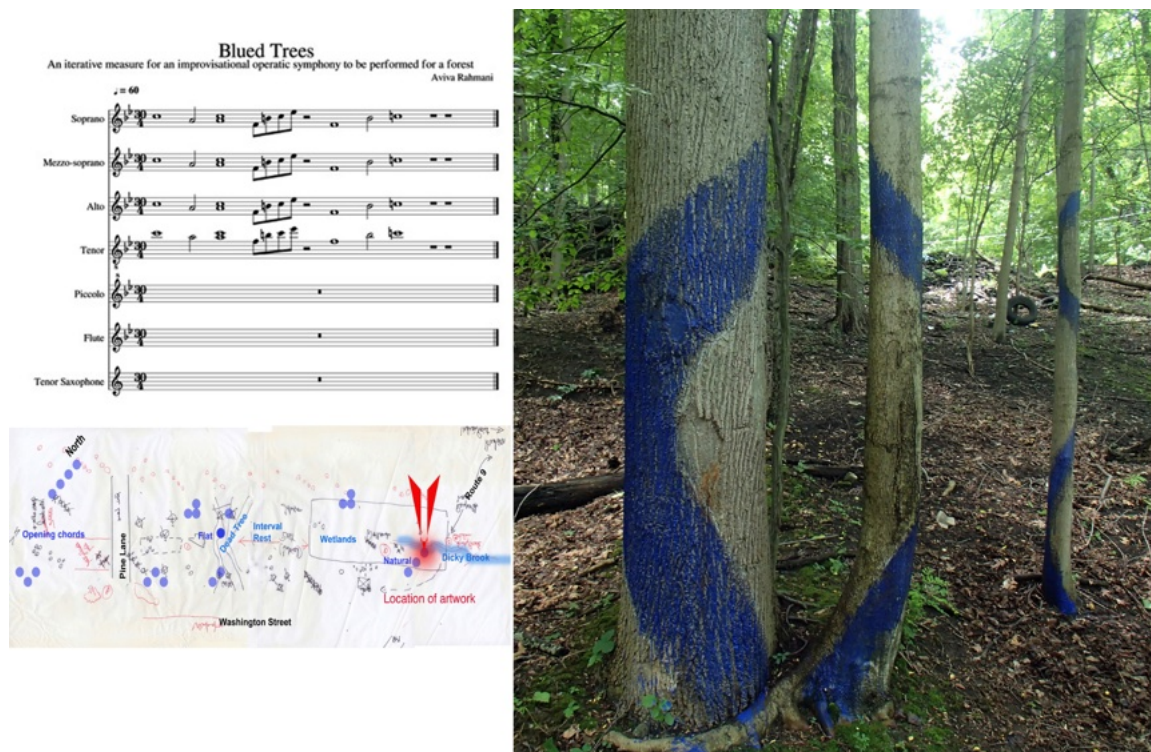
On **August 26, 2023**, the first preview for ***Blued Trees***, an opera named for an interstate, transdisciplinary installation by ecoartist Aviva Rahmani, [will premiere](#) in Brooklyn's **Soapbox Gallery**. The opera is a collaboration between Rahmani, **composer Julia Schwartz**, and **librettist Catherine Filloux** with **projectionists Lauren Petty** and **Shaun Irons**, that harnesses not only the power of art as a means for climate change awareness and exploration of ethical debates, but also of challenging environmental law itself and that vital question - who it really protects.

When it debuted in 2016, Rahmani's [The Blued Trees Symphony](#) sought the protection of the Federal statute Visual Artists Rights Act of 1990 (VARA), codified at 17 U.S.C. § 106A, granting moral rights for works of visual art, thus serving as a legal barricade defending vulnerable ecosystems where it was created.

Using a combination of naturally-sourced ultramarine blue pigment and buttermilk, Rahmani set strikingly bold brush strokes of blue music notes on strategically-placed



trees in areas threatened by imminent pipeline construction. The aerial topography of the installation represents a musical score, with the trees as the notes on the staff; thus, *Blued Trees* envelops the regions on which it is painted - from New York State to Saskatoon, Canada - making a layer of defensible protection.



The opera asks both philosophical and practical questions about climate change as it pertains to human rights, personal ethics, the judicial system, and more. Its pseudo-allegorical libretto by Filloux highlights the generational conflicts about our environment through the lens of Gary, a pipeline executive, who is being charged with ecocide for his company's destruction of the forest. Despite opposition from his daughter, an obstetrician whose argument on the basis of human rights for babies and children highlights common familial tensions about the gravity of climate change, Gary is relentless in his vision of his business success. The company has destroyed the forest in which an art installation stands, thus violating the artist's moral rights of ownership as stated by VARA. This scenario, which mirrors the successes and struggles of *The Blued Trees Symphony* in practice and in its subsequent mock trial in April 2018 at the Cardozo School of Law, ultimately sheds light on big oil's blatant disregard for the law, the environment, and human rights, and generates crucial conversations about these tenets of civility.

***Blued Trees***, a preview of the modern opera  
**Saturday, August 26, 2023, 8PM**  
**Soapbox Gallery, Brooklyn (636 Dean Street)**  
**JULIA SCHWARTZ**, composer

CATHERINE FILLOUX, librettist

AVIVA RAHMANI, creative director

SHAUN IRONS & LAUREN PETTY, projectionists

LIANNE COBLE, soprano (Daughter, Lawyer)

CATHERINE MIEUN CHOI-STECKMEYER, mezzo-soprano (Wife, Artist)

ROSS BENOLIEL, baritone (Gary)

JOSEPH VAZ, piano

Preview program:

Aria (Gary) "Art is beautiful"

Aria (Daughter, with Gary) "I never want to see you"

Duet (Lawyer and Artist) "What is *The Blue Trees Symphony*?"

Aria (Gary and Wife) "The settlement I will offer"

Arias (Artist and Gary) "What do you do?" & "Once I bought a painting"

Aria (Wife) "I often take the train to the city" (Read by librettist or by singer playing Wife TBD)

LINKS:

[Aviva Rahmani](#)

[Catherine Filloux](#)

[Julia Schwartz](#)

[Shaun Irons & Lauren Petty](#)

[Liane Coble](#)

[Catherine MiEun Choi-Steckmeyer](#)

[Ross Benoliel](#)

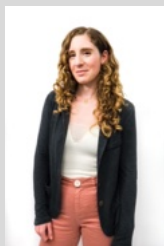
[Joseph Vaz](#)

[Blued Trees Symphony Overture](#)

[Blued Trees Symphony in HuffPost](#)

[Blued Trees Symphony in Hyperallergic](#)

[Artist Headshots](#)



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