



Crane's 'The Bridge' inspires musical theatre production



Liv Cummins, a lyricist/bookwriter, is best known for her production "Vanishing Point," which explores the lives of Amelia Earhart, Agatha Christie and Aimee Semple-McPherson. Photo courtesy of Liv Cummins

Brooklyn Historical Society, Columbia Arts Team Present Piece that Explores Building of Brooklyn Bridge
Brooklyn Daily Eagle

Famed poet Hart Crane's "The Bridge," among the most celebrated, enduring tributes to the Brooklyn Bridge, has inspired a new piece of art that explores the building of the great landmark that has come to define and symbolize Brooklyn. From Oct. 15 to 17, Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) and Columbia Arts Team will present a workshop production — and the New York City premiere — of Matt Marks' and Liv Cummins' "The Bridge," which examines the building of the bridge through Crane's epic poem.

Marks and Cummins wrote the piece while they were graduate students at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program. Both were first drawn to the story when they saw a plaque on the bridge's Brooklyn tower, which begins: "Dedicated to the memory of Emily Warren Roebling." This prompted

questions about who Emily was as an individual and what her involvement was in the engineering of the Brooklyn Bridge in the 1870s.

The duo's research also led them to discover Crane and his poem, and their production examines both Roebling's and Crane's achievements in building a literal



This historic postcard shows the Brooklyn Bridge in the late 1800s. Image courtesy of Columbia Arts Team

bridge and a figurative bridge in the same spot, 50 years apart.

Marks' and Cummins' production, which they call an opera/musical theatre hybrid, is structured as a collage, with short scenes leading up to bigger musical moments as Hart's poem and Emily's bridge are built. Musically, the piece draws on both the jazz-infused 1920s and the genteel Victorian 1880s. The writers explain that their aim is to illuminate the relationship between art, infrastructure and history, showing how the examination of these elements together can lead to exponential cultural understanding.

The production also highlights the role the *Brooklyn Eagle* played in reporting on the daily goings-on with the bridge. The newspaper served to inform the public on construction developments and to keep the project in the spotlight for the major players involved.

Marks' and Cummins' workshop production is being presented in partnership with the New York City Landmarks



Matt Marks is a composer, musician and performer based in Nottingham, England, who has worked with theatres and theatre companies in the U.K., U.S., Australia, China and Europe. Photo courtesy of Liv Cummins

50, an alliance of more than two hundred organizations and landmarks across the city engaging and informing the public about the passage of the Landmarks Preservation Law on April 19, 1965.

For more information, visit the production's [Indiegogo](#) page. Here, the writers provide videos and background information, and visitors are encouraged to contribute to help cover costs to fund the workshop.

Performances begin at 7:30 p.m. and take place at the Brooklyn Historical Society (128 Pierrepont St. in Brooklyn Heights). Tickets and additional information can be found at [www.brooklynhistory.org](#).



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