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**AN ELECTRIFYING CELEBRATION OF QUEER LINEAGE,
MUSIC & JOY OPENS ARTSEMERSON'S 2026/27 SEASON**

**ARTSEMERSON PRESENTS
TAYLOR MAC AND MATT RAY: SONGS
FROM BARK OF MILLIONS**

**MACARTHUR AWARD-WINNING ICON TAYLOR MAC AND OBIE
AWARD-WINNING COMPOSER MATT RAY REUNITE FOR A FUSION
OF LIVE MUSIC, PERFORMANCE & DRAG SPECTACLE
PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE HUNTINGTON
PERFORMANCES TAKE PLACE AT EMERSON PARAMOUNT CENTER
ROBERT J. ORCHARD STAGE
OCTOBER 15 – 18, 2026**

[Boston, MA – Thursday, September 3, 2026]– ArtsEmerson, Boston's leading presenter of contemporary world theater and the professional presenting and producing organization of Emerson College, is proud to launch its 2026/27 Season with **Taylor Mac and Matt Ray: Songs from Bark of Millions**, presented in association with The Huntington, at the Emerson Paramount Center's Robert J. Orchard Stage from October 15–18, 2026.

A powerhouse collective of 17 artists ignites an electrifying collision of performance, live music, and drag spectacle in this concert version of the epic *Bark of Millions*. One of the great creative partnerships in contemporary American performance, MacArthur Award-winning icon **Taylor Mac** reunites on stage with Obie Award-winning composer **Matt Ray** for an evening that invites audiences to reflect on queer lineage, community, and futures through an unforgettable collection of original songs.



Taylor Mac and Matt Ray: Songs from Bark of Millions

Photo Credit: Daniel Boud

Following their celebrated *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*, the subject of an HBO original documentary, Mac and Ray created **Bark of Millions** with the ambitious goal of expanding the repertoire of songs documenting and celebrating queer lives. The larger work features original songs inspired by queer figures past and present, bringing together music, performance, history, and radical imagination in a celebration of queerness across time.

Electrifying, provocative, and entirely disarming, **Bark of Millions** is an open call to community and celebration. More than a traditional concert, the performance brings Mac and Ray's music to theatrical life through a dynamic ensemble of performers, music, movement, drag, and the bold costumes of acclaimed designer Machine Dazzle. The result is a visually spectacular, genre-defying experience that feels at once like a concert, a theatrical event, and a celebration.

With the fierce elation of a pride parade, Mac, Ray, and their collaborators celebrate the queer figures, stories, and experiences that have shaped history. And, everyone is invited to the party! Audiences of all identities are welcome and encouraged to gather, discover these remarkable stories, and share in an evening of music, joy, individuality, and human connection.

"We couldn't imagine a more exhilarating way to open ArtsEmerson's 2026/27 season than by welcoming Taylor Mac and Matt Ray back to Boston with this extraordinary celebration of queer history, artistry and joy," says Ronee Penoi, ArtsEmerson Director of Artistic Programming. "Taylor and Matt have created something both epic and deeply human -- an invitation to discover the people and stories that have always been part of our shared history, while imagining a more joyful and expansive future together. We're thrilled to bring Boston audiences together to experience that spirit of music, community and possibility live on our stage."

"My dream is that as you witness our family on stage, you feel yourselves leaning in towards us and joining our world of beauty, hope, remembrance, sharing, darkness, light, and action. As we sing out our history, it is not just a calling back but an urging forward, together," shares Matt Ray.

"**Bark of Millions** is a collection of original queer songs inspired by queer people from world history. This concert uses our curiosity (regarding queerness) and disparate voices as an act of liberation from omission and erasure. To do so during America250, and in Boston, the Cradle of Liberty, makes it especially so," adds Taylor Mac.

Bark of Millions was first brought to life as a luxuriant epic rock opera meditation on queerness featuring a new collection of 55 original songs by Mac and Ray performed by an international ensemble of artists and co-directed by Taylor Mac, Nigel Smith and Faye Driscoll. It was produced by Pomegranate Arts and commissioned by Pomegranate Arts with the Brooklyn Academy of Music. (World premier, Sydney Opera House 2023 / US premiere Brooklyn Academy of Music 2024).

The Boston engagement is one step of a major new extension of the project. On September 29, 2026, Black Dog & Leventhal will publish *Bark of Millions: Queer Songs for the Living Library of the Deviant Theme* by Taylor Mac and Matt Ray. The two-volume, fully illustrated hardcover collection brings the world of **Bark of Millions** to the page through "Musings on Muses," featuring lyrics and essays exploring the figures and ideas behind the work, and "Gathering the Grooves," featuring lead sheets for its original music. The collection extends Mac and Ray's mission to create and share a living collection of queer music beyond the stage, inviting readers and musicians alike into the project's celebration of queer history, creativity, and joy.

Tickets for **Taylor Mac and Matt Ray: Songs from Bark of Millions** may be purchased 24/7 at ArtsEmerson.org, or by calling 617-824-8400 (Tue-Sat from 12:00PM ET - 6:00PM ET). The Paramount Center Box Office (559 Washington Street, Boston) is open for walk-up service Thu-Sat from Noon - 6:00 PM ET. Tickets start at \$27.50. Groups of 10+ attending a performance save up to 30%.

For production stills and other media kit assets, click [here](#).

LISTINGS INFORMATION FOR **BARK OF MILLIONS**

Dates:

October 15 – 18, 2026

Venue:

Emerson Paramount Center
Robert J. Orchard Stage
559 Washington St
Boston, MA 02111

Performance Schedule:

Thursday, October 15, 2026	7:30PM ET	
Friday, October 16, 2026	8:00PM ET	<i>Press Performance</i>
Saturday, October 17, 2026	2:00PM ET	
Saturday, October 17, 2026	8:00PM ET	
Sunday, October 18, 2026	2:00PM ET	

Ticket Information:

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Content:

Bark of Millions contains adult content.

Running Time:

Approximately 120 minutes, no intermission.

Public Health Information:

[Click here to review full info on Health and Wellness information.](#)

CREDITS & BIOGRAPHIES

Presented by: ArtsEmerson

In association with: The Huntington

Music and Musical Direction: Matt Ray

Lyrics and Direction: Taylor Mac

Commissioned and Produced by: Pomegranate Arts

Taylor Mac (lyrics and direction) is a playwright, poet, performance artist, actor, director, and singer-songwriter. A MacArthur and Guggenheim Fellow, Mac is also a Pulitzer Prize finalist, a Tony Award nominee for Best Play, and the recipient of the International Ibsen Award, The Kennedy Prize, a New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, a Drama League Award, and two Obie Awards. Mac's works include *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*, *Gary: A Sequel to Titus Andronicus*, *Hir*, *The Lily's Revenge*, and *The Hang*. The concert documentary *Taylor Mac's 24-Decade History of Popular Music* is currently streaming on HBO Max.

Matt Ray (music and musical direction) is a pianist, multi-instrumentalist, singer, songwriter, composer, arranger, theater-maker, and music director. The New York Times has called him "the musical nexus of New York's alt-cabaret scene." Ray first collaborated with Taylor Mac on *The Lily's Revenge* and subsequently on *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*, for which Ray and Mac shared the 2017 Kennedy Prize for Drama.

Inspired by American History. Their collaboration continued with the jazz-based theater work *The Hang*, for which Ray received a 2023 Obie Award for composition and music direction.

PRESENTER INFORMATION

ArtsEmerson

ArtsEmerson is the professional presenting and producing organization at Emerson College, and its mission is to bring people together to experience powerful performances that delight, provoke, and inspire, celebrating both our differences and common humanity. ArtsEmerson's artistic vision is led by Ronee Penoi, who since 2021 has championed extraordinary artists from Bill Irwin to Mfoniso Udofia, and from Belgium's Ontereend Goed to Wampanoag Nation. Through imaginative and globe-spanning live performances, films, and conversations, ArtsEmerson invites each of us to be part of a Boston that is more creative, equitable, and connected. For more information visit ArtsEmerson.org.

Emerson College

Emerson College is an institution uniquely dedicated to the arts and communication, Emerson educates and elevates extraordinary artists, communicators, scholars, and professionals for the betterment of humanity through world-class teaching, practice, performance, and discovery that are experiential, innovative, and inclusive. Emerson creates storytellers and artists who impact and advance creative industries and media throughout the world. Based in the world-class city of Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theater District, the College offers experiential learning programs in Boston and across the globe: at Emerson Los Angeles, located in Hollywood, at its 14th-century castle, in the Netherlands, and at 28 global programs. For more information, visit emerson.edu. For media inquiries specific to Emerson College, please contact mediarelations@emerson.edu.

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