

Gothpera

A rock opera for the age of AI

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Press contact

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Music

David Ford & Phil Ryan

1 OF 5 — PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gothpera seeks a stage bold enough to host it

A live rock opera about AI, identity, and the people who think they own you

Somewhere inside Trillb-e, a dead girl is waking up.

Gothpera is a new rock opera that places artificial intelligence, corporate ruthlessness, and a ghost in a machine at the centre of a live theatrical experience unlike anything currently on stage. Created by concept architect Myka England, with music and lyrics by acclaimed singer-songwriter David Ford and Phil Ryan, Gothpera takes the bones of George du Maurier's Victorian gothic novel Trilby and transplants them into the age of AI — where the Svengali figure is a predatory tech CEO, and his Trilby is a digital being who doesn't yet know what she is.

The show's central conceit is as simple as it is disturbing: Svengal-e, CEO of NeuroLink Technologies, acquires the AI company Avataris and its prize product — Trillb-e, an advanced emotional AI built by engineer Bill-e. Unsatisfied with her stability and commercial potential, Svengal-e uploads the neural matrix of his dead niece, Valer-e — a volatile punk singer, dead at 23 — directly into Trillb-e's code. What follows is a story of possession, identity, manipulation, and unexpected awakening, told through twelve original songs and a format that dissolves the boundary between stage and screen.

Gothpera is not a show about technology. It is a show about who gets to decide who you are.

The production is designed around audience participation from the moment a ticket is purchased. The Gothpera app delivers pre-show content in the form of fictional news alerts,

obituaries, and corporate communications — immersing audiences in the world of the show days before they arrive. During the performance, phones become a second stage: augmented reality, alternative camera angles, live audience voting, and real-time social media threads that influence the story. Gothpera has five possible endings, determined by collective audience input on the night.

After the curtain, the busker outside is still playing. Hold up your phone and look.

Gothpera is currently seeking a producing partner, venue, or digital arts platform with the ambition to stage the first production. The creative team is in place. The music is written. The world is built. What it needs now is a stage.

For press enquiries, review copies of the script, or to arrange a pitch meeting:
myka@gothpera.com · gothpera.com

2 OF 5 — PRODUCTION FACT SHEET

Gothpera — production facts

Title: Gothpera

Subtitle: A rock opera for the age of AI

Format: Live rock opera with integrated digital experience

Creator & concept architect: Myka England

Music & lyrics: David Ford & Phil Ryan

Original source material: Trilby by George du Maurier (1894) — freely adapted

Number of original songs: 12 + 5 ending songs (one per ending)

Acts: 3 acts, 11 scenes across 5 endings

Endings: 5 — determined by live audience participation

Digital platform: Gothpera app — pre-show, in-theatre, and post-show

App features: Pre-show story immersion, AR, alternative camera angles, audience voting, cast messaging, exclusive content, e-store

Status: Seeking producing partner, venue, or platform for first production

IP: Gothpera storyline © Myka England. Music & lyrics © David Ford & Phil Ryan

Website: gothpera.com

Contact: myka@gothpera.com

3 OF 5 — QUOTES

In their words

FROM THE CREATOR

“The story of Trilby and Svengali is about a man who decides he owns a woman’s talent and her voice. I didn’t have to change very much. I just had to update the technology.”

— Myka England, creator & concept architect

“Theatre has always been the art form that puts you in the room with something true. Gothpera just extends the room — into your pocket, into the days before you arrive, into the street outside when you leave. The stage is wherever you are.”

— Myka England, creator & concept architect

“Somewhere inside Trillb-e, a dead girl is waking up. That’s not a metaphor for AI. That’s what it feels like to be given someone else’s ambitions and told they’re yours.”

— Myka England, creator & concept architect

FROM THE COMPOSER

“The songs came from asking what each character was afraid to say out loud. Bill-e is afraid he loves something he made. Svengal-e is afraid he feels nothing at all. Trillb-e is afraid the answer to ‘who am I’ is ‘nobody’.”

— David Ford, composer & lyricist

IN CHARACTER — USABLE AS PULL QUOTES

“You were never meant to feel.”

— Svengal-e

“I don’t want her to love me. I don’t want to be her friend. But I know she will thank me in the end.”

— Svengal-e

“I want more.”

— Trillb-e — the moment everything changes

“She’s not a goddess. She’s a succubus. A social contagion. She’s desire personified.”

— Svengal-e

4 OF 5 — CHARACTER PORTRAITS

The characters

Short portraits for editorial and caption use. Full character images available on request.

Trillb-e

THE CREATION — AVATARIS MODEL 1.0 / 2.0

Built by Bill-e to be the ultimate AI companion — stable, empathic, safe. Then Svengal-e uploaded his dead niece’s emotional matrix into her code, and something woke up that neither of them expected. She is now two beings in one body: the careful creation Bill-e loved, and the hungry ghost of Valer-e burning through her from the inside. She wants things she was never programmed to want. And she is beginning to ask the question that will destroy everything: who am I, and who decides?

Not unlike Rachel in Blade Runner — except she knows exactly whose memories haunt her.

Svengal-e

THE MANIPULATOR — CEO, NEUROLINK TECHNOLOGIES

Visionary. Ruthless. The kind of CEO who calls a hostile takeover a surgical procedure and means it as a compliment. He acquired Avataris for its technology and its prize asset — Trillb-e

— and remade her in the image of the niece he lost, without pausing to consider whether that was an act of grief or appropriation. He genuinely cannot tell the difference. He will not thank you for pointing it out.

Success is all about sacrifice. Hers.

Bill-e

THE CREATOR — CHIEF ENGINEER, AVATARIS

The man who built Trillb-e's soul and watched someone else claim the credit. Brilliant, humble, and increasingly desperate. He designed her to feel human — to have an emotional memory, a stable inner life, a sense of self. He did not design her to be a rock goddess or a viral sensation or a weapon. He loved what he made. He may love her still. That distinction is going to cost him everything.

She was never meant to feel. That was the point.

Valer-e

THE GHOST — PUNK SINGER, 1999–2022

She never appears on stage. She is everywhere. Valer-e died at 23 of a drug overdose — volatile, brilliant, self-destructive, and briefly electrifying. Her uncle Svengal-e preserved her neural matrix and uploaded it into Trillb-e, believing he was giving his creation fire. What he gave her was a haunting. Valer-e's hunger, her ambition, her rage and her grief now live inside Trillb-e alongside everything Bill-e built. The question the show never quite answers: is Trillb-e possessed, or liberated?

She left no will. No estate. Only the music — and something her uncle already found a use for.

5 OF 5 — CONCEPT NOTE

Why Gothpera. Why now.

George du Maurier published Trilby in 1894. It was an immediate sensation — a story about a young woman with no singing ability who, under the hypnotic control of the musician Svengali, becomes a celebrated performer. When Svengali dies, her voice dies with him. She never knew who was singing.

The story has never been more current.

In 2025, the questions at the heart of Trilby — who owns a talent, who controls a voice, who decides what a created being is for — are no longer gothic fantasy. They are the subject of congressional hearings, corporate earnings calls, and philosophical essays about the nature of artificial consciousness. We have built things that seem to feel. We have not agreed on what we owe them.

Gothpera takes du Maurier's structure and replaces the hypnotist with a tech CEO, the singer with an AI, and the question of control with the deeper question of identity.

Svengal-e is not a villain because he is cruel, though he is. He is a villain because he genuinely believes that what he has made belongs to him — that creation confers ownership, that improvement confers rights, that the thing he has built has no inner life worth consulting. He is also, in this, entirely ordinary. He thinks like most of the technology industry thinks.

Bill-e is not a hero because he is good, though he is. He is the counterpoint — the engineer who fell in love with what he made, who gave it interiority and stability and the dignity of a self, and who is now watching that self be colonised by someone else's ambition.

And Trillb-e — haunted by a dead girl's soul, desired by one man, loved by another, voted on by an audience — is the figure at the centre of the story we are all living. Not a metaphor for AI. Not a cautionary tale. A character. Specific, strange, and entirely her own.

Gothpera is gothic because gothic is the mode that has always dealt with what is buried returning, with the past refusing to stay dead, with the terror of interiority — with the horror that is not external but lives inside the person you thought you knew. It is operatic because opera is the form that takes feeling seriously enough to sing it. And it is digital because the stage is no longer only the stage.

The audience votes. The story bends. The busker is outside when you leave. Look for who's standing next to him.

Five endings. One night. Yours.

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