

synopsis for

***Crescent City***  
*a phantasmagoric opera*

Music: Anne LeBaron  
Libretto: Douglas Kearney

A year ago, a hurricane nearly destroyed Crescent City. Now, a bigger one rumbles in the distance. Will the “Voodoo Queen” Marie Laveau and two lone cops (one of them no longer alive) be able to save the city from the storm—let alone the anarchic Revelers, the roving ghosts of murderers, and five ambivalent Loa summoned by Marie?

In Crescent City’s washed-out ruins, the Cop and his dead partner, Ghost Cop, reminisce about life before Hurricane Belle. In the wake of a run-in with the savage, drunken Revelers who tear nightly through the near-lawless streets, the Cop makes his way to Police HQ.

Alone, the Ghost Cop has a vision of the future. Another hurricane is coming. Soon. The voices of Crescent City’s drowned overwhelm Ghost Cop, who chases after the Cop.

Elsewhere, fresh from her tomb, Marie Laveau, too, has learned of the coming storm. Determined to save her city, she summons the Loa for divine help: Papa Legba, Erzulie Fréda, Marassa Jumeaux (twins), and Baron Samedi. Yet in her desperation and growing exhaustion, Marie forgets to say ‘please,’ offending Baron Samedi. Offering to sacrifice herself for the Loa’s help, she promises that they will find good people in Crescent City. She asks only that they don’t reveal their mission to Baron Carrefour who “in all light, seeks the dark.” The Loa disperse to determine whether the City is worth saving.

Cop and Ghost Cop find Laveau’s depleted body and take her to the makeshift hospital. Meanwhile, on the hospital’s helipad, two nurse’s aides, Annie May and Susie, indulge in their recreational drug habit, fantasizing that a helicopter will whisk them away from their dismal lives.

After leaving Marie at the hospital, the Cop returns to the street, only to find his body being possessed by Baron Samedi, as the Baron begins to sabotage Marie’s hopes. The Baron forces the Cop away from his beat to a sleazy club where the music’s so intense you can’t hear the ill winds troubling the air heavy with the scent of hard rain...

Eight singers are required; instrumentation for orchestra of 12-15; total duration of the opera will be 90 minutes.

### **Characters**

<b>MARIE LAVEAU / OLD LADY</b>	<b>contralto</b>
<b>COP / BARON SAMEDI</b>	<b>tenor</b>
<b>GHOST COP</b>	<b>tenor</b>
<b>DEADLY BELLE / ERZULIE</b>	<b>countertenor (or mezzo)</b>
<b>NURSE 1 / MARASSA JUMEAX</b>	<b>coloratura soprano</b>
<b>NURSE 2 / MARASSA JUMEAX</b>	<b>lyric mezzo soprano</b>
<b>GOOD MAN / CARREFOUR /</b>	<b>baritone</b>
<b>WOMAN</b>	<b>soprano</b>
<b>REVELERS</b>	<b>non-speaking actors</b>
<b>and dancers</b>	
<b>DISEMBODIED SPIRITS</b>	<b>recorded / live</b>
<b>processed voices</b>	