

**Spectacular interactive light experience by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer debuts in Philadelphia**



Rahzel performs with Mayor Michael Nutter (l) watching the lights. Photo: James Ewing



Inspired by the city's rich tradition of democracy and respect for free speech, Open Air was created specifically for Philadelphia and for participation by the general public. Using a free mobile app developed by Lozano-Hemmer's studio, participants are invited to record and submit messages of up to 30 seconds in length—shout-outs, poems, songs, rants, dedications, proposals. In response, 24 powerful robotic searchlights, stationed strategically along a half-mile section of the Parkway, will create a unique, dynamic light formation in the sky. The lights will respond in brightness and position to the GPS location of the participants and the frequency and amplitude of their voice recording, which can be heard through the app, the project website or public speakers located at the Project Information Center at Eakins Oval (24th Street and the Parkway). The free "Open Air Philly" app is from the iTunes store starting Sept. 20.

Priority will be given to those submitting messages from the Parkway, but for those not onsite, the project website, [www.openairphilly.net](http://www.openairphilly.net), allow users to record messages that will be archived and played back by the lights if other web visitors rate them highly. All participants will have a personalized webpage created automatically with their message, comments and images of the light sculptures that their voice created.

Depending on atmospheric conditions, Open Air will be seen up to 10 miles away from the Parkway each evening from 8 to 11pm. The Project Information Center is equipped with app download, free mobile loan stations and seating areas for watching the lights and listening to the messages. There is also an Information Outpost located at Sister Cities Park (18th Street and Logan Square).

"This project is meant to be a new public space for Philadelphians to express themselves," says Lozano-Hemmer, who is globally acclaimed for his large-scale interactive art experiences, including the well-known 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics installation Vectorial Elevation. Thousands of individuals will be able to participate onsite during the project's duration, and hundreds of thousands more will experience the project online and as viewers. Lozano-Hemmer's interest "is to create intimacy and not intimidation. While the project will be spectacular in scale, what matters to me is that individual participants can personalize their city with their contributions."