

Wednesday, January 6, 2021

## National Sawdust and The Center for Ballet and the Arts at NYU Announce \$300,000 Partnership with Toulmin Foundation

Company: National Sawdust

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The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation has announced the creation of a new program to foster collaboration between women composers and choreographers with the aim of creating new works in the virtual medium. The \$300,000 gift supports a one-year partnership between National Sawdust and The Center for Ballet and the Arts at NYU (CBA). Beginning in November 2020, the program is already supporting 45 appointed women choreographers and composers to help develop their skills, create and present new work, and build a community of like-minded artists that will enhance their careers. At least half of the participating women will represent BIWOC (Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color) communities.

Alexander Sanger, a Trustee of the Toulmin Foundation, on behalf of his fellow trustees, William Villafranco and Walter Montaigne, says that, "in this time when live stage performance is not possible, composers and choreographers need to explore new ways to create, collaborate and present their work. Creating for the virtual world is fundamentally different than creating for the stage and involves skills and partnering in the fields of film, sound, set design, lighting and computer technology that are in many cases new for the choreographer or composer. This program aims to fill that need. Further, the program will continue the Foundation's efforts to bring increased diversity and support a wide range of talents in the performing arts. Mrs. Toulmin, a passionate supporter of the performing arts, believed in fairness and equity for all women, and we are proud to carry on her legacy."

This appointed program will feature five "Toulmin Fellows" and forty "Toulmin Creators." Each will receive a package of financial, intellectual, and creative resources to support development of new work. The five Toulmin Fellows will spend the winter in residence at The Center for Ballet and the Arts and the spring at National Sawdust, building toward participation in National Sawdust's Digital Discovery Festival (DDF). They will receive financial support, office and studio space, and access to videographers, sound engineers, AV equipment and marketing support. Each fellow will be paired with a carefully selected mentor who will support their creative processes throughout the year.

The forty Toulmin Creators will either participate in DDF or present a seminar to a multi-disciplinary group of artists and scholars at CBA. Both Fellows and Creators will be provided with professional development in the form of 20 master classes and seminars on such topics as intellectual property, improvisation, and arts criticism. They will also receive access to National Sawdust's Digital Knowledge Hub, which will share and document National Sawdust's extensive mentorship program to accompany its digital stage.

More information on each of the Toulmin Fellows follows. To request more information about this program or to arrange for interviews with the Fellows or representatives of National Sawdust, The Center for Ballet and the Arts at NYU or The Toulmin Foundation, please reply to this email or contact John Seroff at [johns@NationalSawdust.org](mailto:johns@NationalSawdust.org)

### Toulmin Fellows

Amy Hall Garner, Choreographer

Amy Hall Garner is a native of Huntsville, Alabama, and a graduate of The Juilliard School. Her work has been praised internationally and commissioned by Ailey II, ABT Studio Company, Collage Dance Collective, The Juilliard School, The Ailey School, Barnard College, The University of the Arts, Columbia Ballet Collaborative, Point Park University, and Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. Recently, she has received virtual commissions from BalletX, Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Guggenheim Museum's Works & Process Digital Series, ABT Studio Company, and a dual company collaboration between the Paul Taylor Dance Company and Miami City Ballet. She personally coached Grammy Award winner Beyoncé, providing additional choreography for The Mrs. Carter Show World Tour. Theatrical choreography credits include: The Color Purple (Milwaukee Repertory Theater) and Invisible Thread, associate choreographer (Second Stage Theater). In 2018, she was selected to participate in Alvin Ailey's New Directions Choreography Lab supported by the Ford Foundation. Garner was one of the first recipients of the Joffrey Ballet's Choreography of Color Award (now titled Winning Works). Amy Hall Garner is an adjunct professor at New York University's New Studio on Broadway at Tisch School of the Arts.

Molly Joyce, Composer/Performer

Molly Joyce's work is primarily concerned with disability as a creative source. She has an impaired left hand from a previous car accident, and the primary vehicle in her pursuit is her electric vintage toy organ, an instrument she bought on eBay which suits her body and engages her disability on a compositional and performative level. Joyce's creative projects have been presented at TEDxMidAtlantic, Bang on a Can Marathon, Danspace Project, Gaudeamus Muziekweek, National Gallery of Art, Classical:NEXT, VisionIntoArt's FERUS Festival, and featured in outlets such as Pitchfork, Red Bull Radio, WNYC's New Sounds, and I Care If You Listen. Additionally, she has written for publications 21CM, Disability Arts Online, and collaborated across disciplines including with visual artists Lex Brown and Julianne Swartz, choreographers Melissa Barak and Jerron Herman, director Austin Regan, and writers Marco Grosse and Christopher Oscar Peña.

Marisa Michelson, Composer | Singer | Improviser, and Miriam Parker, Interdisciplinary Artist

Marisa Michelson is a singer, composer, improviser, vocal philosopher and teacher. She is the founder and director of the vocal performance collective Constellation Chor | an immersion in voice, movement, and spirit. Performing internationally and in New York City, the Chor made their Lincoln Center debut in 2018 premiering Ashley Fure's Filament with the New York Philharmonic. Since 2016, Constellation Chor has been in residence at the historic Judson Memorial Church and in 2019 the Chor performed monthly at Spectrum in Brooklyn, New York. They have collaborated with Claire Chase, Sarah Hennies, the Kitchen, Heartbeat Opera, Harvard Art Lab. Since the pandemic, they joined Maria Popova and Paola Prestini at Pioneer Works in Brooklyn, New York to bring to life Prestini's composition Tree of 40 Fruit as part of an outdoor ritual-celebration. As well as collaborating with composers, choreographers, directors, and videographers, they perform interdisciplinary pieces composed by Michelson. As a solo artist or as the director of Constellation Chor, Michelson has been in residence with or won awards from Pioneer Works, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, MacDowell, Ucross, New Dramatists, Jonathan Larson, the Eric Salzman Foundation, and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, among others. Michelson lives, works and teaches in New York City and Hudson, New York.

Miriam Parker is an interdisciplinary artist who uses movement, paint, media and sculpture/installation within a performance-based practice. Her work has been influenced by her experience as a dancer, her study of Buddhism and phenomenology, and her connection to the free jazz tradition. Parker has performed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) and The Fridman Gallery (New York), and held residencies at École Normale Supérieure (Paris) and at the Every Women Biennial (New York), among others. Parker has received grants from LMCC in 2013 and Brooklyn Arts Council in 2019. She has previously collaborated with Jo Wood-Brown, Christina Smiros and Luke Stewart, among others. Parker is also co-founder and collaborator of Inner City Projects, a multimedia collaborative work group with Jo Wood Brown, based in New York. Parker lives and works in New York.

Brianna Mims, Artist, Abolitionist, and Facilitator

Brianna Mims is a movement artist, facilitator, and abolitionist. She studied Dance and NGOs and Social Change at the University of Southern California. She currently works for Californians United for a Responsible Budget and is in residency as an Artist Organizer at Women's Center for Creative Work.

#### About The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation

The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation is the first charitable organization to focus its performing arts grantmaking on promoting emerging female composers, choreographers and playwrights in the fields of opera, symphonic music, ballet and theater and to promoting women of color creators within these fields, focusing its grantmaking on a broad diversity of voices that need to be heard. The Foundation carries on the principles of its founder, Virginia B. Toulmin, a long-time patron of the arts, who believed in equal access and opportunity for women.

#### About The Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University

The Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University is an international research institute for scholars and artists of ballet and its related arts and sciences. It exists to inspire new ideas and new dances, expanding the way we think about the art form's history, practice, and performance in the 21st century. To learn more, please visit [balletcenter.nyu.edu](http://balletcenter.nyu.edu).

#### About National Sawdust

National Sawdust builds new audiences for music by providing outstanding resources and programmatic support to both emerging and established artists and composers. Centered on discovery within music, National Sawdust's programming strives to introduce audiences to new artists and styles, while also introducing artists to new audiences. As an incubator of new music from across the genre spectrum, National Sawdust provides artists the space, time, and resources they need to create and present their art at its best.

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National Sawdust  
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