

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, PLEASE

Media Contact: **Darren DeLuca**
darren.deluca@gmail.com | 603-489-7624



ARTSEMERSON ANNOUNCES ITS 2021/22 SEASON

PREMIERE EVENTS INCLUDE:

**WAYNE SHORTER AND ESPERANZA SPALDING'S IPHIGENIA AND
SLEEPING WEAZEL'S EVERYDAY LIFE AND OTHER ODDS & ENDS**

**ARTSEMERSON CONTINUES ITS COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL WORK
WITH PRODUCTIONS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM,
IRAN, CHINA, CHILE AND CANADA**

ALL TICKETS WILL GO ON SALE THIS SUMMER

[Boston, MA – Tuesday, June 29, 2021] – ArtsEmerson, Boston's leading presenter of contemporary world theater and film, is proud to announce its 21/22 Season, featuring five live in-person events, three live virtual events, a roster of on-demand virtual offerings, and a wide variety of opportunities for our community to connect through the organization's signature live and virtual gatherings to foster meaningful public dialogue. The new season continues ArtsEmerson's commitment to international work with an emphasis on uplifting marginalized voices by supporting the presentation and development of work created by artists of color.

Those purchasing season packages receive discounts up to 40% off, and those purchasing 10+ tickets to a single performance qualify for group discounts of up to 30% off. Understanding that members of the public have disparate feelings about making deep commitments to attending shows, this season, ArtsEmerson will provide access to purchase single tickets for all events concurrent with package and group tickets.

Package, group and single tickets for all announced events will go on sale later this summer. To be among the first to gain access to tickets, people are encouraged to join the email list at [ArtsEmerson.org](https://www.ArtsEmerson.org). ArtsEmerson will be holding a **Virtual 21/22 Season Preview Event** on Tuesday, August 3 at 5:00 PM ET, where more detailed information will be shared about all announced events. To reserve free admission to this event, sign up [here on ArtsEmerson's website](#).

"During ArtsEmerson's 20/21 "Year of Experimentation," there was a focus on the development and programming of our new digital venue, and providing support to international artists through reimagined residency programs that support new works, new platforms, and new approaches to process," explains David C. Howse, ArtsEmerson's Executive Director. "We pressed ourselves to take risks in curating virtual programming and in expanding narrative and documentary film programming. And through it all, we discovered a lot about the power of our own resiliency as individuals, as staff members, and as an organization."

"As our city is emerging from the extended pandemic, ArtsEmerson is optimistic about the opportunity to once again feel the close community of theatregoers joining in person at the Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre and the three venues within the Emerson Paramount Center," Howse continues. "With the presence and transmission of Covid-19 continuing to decline in our city and state, we hope to open at full capacity, and we will continue to monitor news and data coming from trusted local, state and national public health agencies to enact a plan that prioritizes gathering in a manner that ensures the well-being of audiences, artists and staff."

Howse concludes, "As last year was about adapting and experimenting, I've been speaking about this season as a 'bridge year,' a year of ArtsEmerson which may not look like what everyone has known, but where we are expanding our vision about what our programming can be, learning what tools can broaden our reach and accessibility, and ultimately understanding how we can apply all these insights to inform how we chart our future."

ArtsEmerson will communicate all updated information through emails, as well as on the [Public Health Update page](#) of its website.



Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower
Photo: Courtesy of Paul Marotta



esperanza spalding
Photo: Courtesy of Sean Pressley

The last 18 months brought an extraordinary increase in the number of both live and recorded theatrical events that can be experienced on streaming devices. Since Spring of 2020, ArtsEmerson has played a key role in bringing more than 100 virtual events to audiences. And very early on, the organization understood that virtual programming wasn't a temporary strategy to replace live performance, but rather a meaningful tool to expand access to its brand of boundary-pushing art beyond the walls of the theatres they steward.

ArtsEmerson's 21/22 Season will kick off with a special free-of-charge celebration, a new piece by The 7 Fingers, **Out Of Order**, which will be available to stream on-demand. The 7 Fingers have appeared on ArtsEmerson stages more than any other company, and last season, the streaming of the troupe's *Sequence 8* marked ArtsEmerson's first presentation in its digital venue. Last Fall, The 7 Fingers embarked on a new adventure, creating a live performance that embraced social distancing, naming it **Out of Order**. When Montreal became a red zone, the show lost the opportunity to meet its audience. Rather than allowing it to disappear, the company transformed the project into a film that is not simply a digital recording, but a cinematographic work in its own right.

On November 12, 2021, ArtsEmerson will mark its first return to gathering audiences in a physical theatre following a gap of 20 months. To celebrate the occasion, ArtsEmerson is hosting the world premiere of **Iphigenia**, a contemporary opera created by a starry dream team of creatives including jazz legend **Wayne Shorter** (composer), multi-GRAMMY® winning musician **esperanza spalding** (librettist and performer), Lileana Blain Cruz (director) and famed architect **Frank Gehry** (scenic designer).

Also in November, theatremaker Thaddeus Phillips, previously represented at ArtsEmerson with *Red Eye to Havre de Grace* (2014) and *17 Border Crossings* (2017), will return with a one-week run of his acclaimed made-for-digital theatre piece, **Zoo Motel**, which premiered in September 2020 and has since become the longest running live theatre work presented virtually to spectators from across the world.

Earlier this year, ArtsEmerson provided an artist residency to support Iranian playwright Nassim Soleimanpour in his exploration to reimagine his acclaimed play, **White Rabbit Red Rabbit**, as a live virtual performance. This December, that experience will come to ArtsEmerson audiences for six performances, with a different performer each time.

February 2022 will be a huge opportunity to experience contemporary music theatre works created by African American women. Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon's stage adaptation of **Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower** will at last arrive as a fully-realized production after twice rescheduling and twice having to cancel to support the greater good of public health. This production is the result of a years-long development process, part of which was ArtsEmerson's presentation of "The Concert Performance" in 2017.

The final three season productions are intimate and impactful stories that will energize audiences at the Emerson Paramount Center's Jackie Liebergott Black Box, the intimate venue that brings intimacy and immediacy to any story presented within its walls. In March 2022, ArtsEmerson welcomes back the Boston-born troupe, **Sleeping Weazel** (whose *Birth Breath Bride Elizabeth* appeared as part of the 2013 The Next Thing Festival) for a two-week world premiere engagement of **Everyday Life and Other Odds and Ends**, Artistic Director Charlotte Meehan's multimedia theatre/dance piece dealing with the humorous, tragic, and sublime trajectory of Parkinson's disease as part of family life.

In April, Travis Alabanza, truly an inimitable force of nature, will bring their performance piece **Burgerz** from the UK to Boston for two weeks. Carving out a place for themselves as one of the UK's prominent trans voices, Alabanza presents a performance that is timely, unsettling and powerful.

Coming May is a two-week run of The Theatre Centre's **Sea Sick**, written and performed by award-winning science journalist Alanna Mitchell and directed by Franco Boni and Ravi Jain. (Jain was the writer/director/performer for ArtsEmerson's virtual presentation of *A Brimful of Asha* earlier this year.) **Sea Sick** is a deeply personal, highly educational and utterly devastating solo performance about the state of the global ocean, inspired by Mitchell's book of the same name. Following the hugely successful run at Edinburgh Fringe in 2019, this presentation is part of a 12 city world tour featuring stops in Boston, California, Canada, Germany, and the UK.

ArtsEmerson's Artistic Engagement team is currently in conversations with a number of international artists and will be providing audiences virtual access to experience their work -- including Chilean playwright **Guillermo Calderon**, and Chinese theatre director **Wang Chong**. And on occasion, ArtsEmerson will bring performance captures to the Bright Family Screening Room, such as a planned presentation of The National Theatre of Scotland's **Adam**, the true story of a young trans man who chooses exile over death and thus begins his remarkable journey. Conceived for the stage and directed by Cora Bissett and written by Frances Poet, the play charts Adam's fight across borders and genders to find a place to call home.

The 21/22 Season will build on the learnings from the past year as ArtsEmerson continues to pursue its mission using the recently-expanded programming of film offerings, screening events both in person at the Emerson Paramount Center's state-of-the-art Bright Family Screening Room, and online with on-demand content streamed in the digital venue. Film programming will include narrative and documentary work screened as part of the **Shared Stories Film Series** (in partnership with Boston Asian American Film Festival, Boston Latino International Film Festival, and Roxbury International Film Festival), the **Projecting Connections: Chinese American Experiences Film Series** (in partnership with Boston Asian American Film Festival), and the **Bright Lights Film Series** (in partnership with the Department of Visual and Media Arts at Emerson College).

ArtsEmerson will also continue its longstanding partnerships with many of New England's premiere film festivals, hosting screenings of **Boston Asian American Film Festival**, **Boston Latino International Film Festival**, **Roxbury International Film Festival**, and **Wicked Queer: the Boston LGBTQ+ Film Festival**.

Details for all film programming will be announced at a later date.

ArtsEmerson's mission is not only to present extraordinary artists and performances from around the world, but to engage diverse multi-generational Boston audiences in thinking and talking about issues that address the concerns and challenges of the contemporary moment. Art is the prompt, and conversation is the point. The 21/22 Season will include signature ArtsEmerson Public Dialogue events, including **Town Halls with Executive Director David C. Howse**, which take attendees behind the scenes to understand the inner-workings of the organization, and **Creative Connections**, which put audiences in direct conversation with artists. ArtsEmerson will continue to use its public-facing platforms – venue marquees, email communications, social media networks and its online journal, ArtsEmersonBlog.org, to expand public discourse around topics of urgency to our city, our nation, and our world.

The 2021/22 season will also feature the return of two ArtsEmerson signature engagement initiatives that expand the reach of the organization beyond the walls of the venues in Downtown's historic Theater District.

The **Play Reading Book Club**, a dynamic theatre literacy and community education program that provides unique and radical access to scripts, artists, and conversations, will be held to supplement the experience of several artistic productions. PRBCs will take place at the Roxbury branch of Boston Public Library and other neighborhood locations, and following successful reimagining of these gatherings to take place virtually over the past year, there will also be opportunities to join and participate in virtual clubs during the 21/22 Season.

In addition, ArtsEmerson is bringing back **Welcome to Boston** cast parties, designed in the tradition of visionary arts leader, humanist and Emerson college alumna, Ms. Elma Lewis, who would have marked her 100th birthday on September 15th of this year. Co-hosted by ArtsEmerson and community partners, the parties celebrate the arrival of national and international artists to Boston, with acclaimed local artists offering performances that serve as a cultural gift of welcome.

Specific programming and scheduling for these and additional civic engagement activities will be announced at a later date.

For production stills and other media kit assets for the 2021/22 season, click [here](#).

VIRTUAL 21/22 SEASON PREVIEW EVENT

August 03, 2021 at 5:00PM ET

SEASON PREVIEW EVENT

ArtsEmerson

Virtual Live Event

ArtsEmerson's Digital Venue

Free Registration available [here](#).

Join Executive Director, David C. Howse, along with special guests, as ArtsEmerson shares more information about the recently-announced programming that will be part of the 21/22 Season.

SEASON KICK-OFF CELEBRATION -- FREE ON-DEMAND STREAMING

October 05 – 17, 2021

OUT OF ORDER

The 7 Fingers

Virtual On-Demand Event

ArtsEmerson's Digital Venue

Out of Order is set in a time when theatres are empty, meeting places and cultural venues are no longer permitted, and physical contact is prohibited. Artists are forced to meet secretly in forsaken spaces. Spread out across this post-apocalyptic setting, ten gloved and masked characters scrutinize one another, prepare, approach, and avoid contact. Coming from all walks of life, these forgotten acrobats cling to their vocation as best they can. In this nod to thespian traditions, the troupe plays with the notions of bourgeoisie, poverty, power and pleasure. Tongue firmly in cheek, **Out Of Order** is a look at the social balance between raw animal instinct and the elevation of minds, bodies and souls in an educated and conformed society.

21/22 THEATRE SEASON EVENTS

November 12 – 13, 2021

IPHIGENIA (WORLD PREMIERE)

esperanza spalding & Wayne Shorter

Live In-Person Event

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre

With music by Wayne Shorter and a libretto by esperanza spalding **Iphigenia** is not an adaptation of the Greek myth as much as it is an intervention into myth-making itself, and an intervention into opera as we know it. Classical and jazz forms collide in a full orchestral score that features Shorter's groundbreaking method of symphonic improvisation, with his venerated quartet at the center. Spalding's libretto is deeply poetic and then suddenly radical – Iphigenia is multiplied, her identity is fractured and shared until the stage is occupied by a chorus of her. The performance will also feature esperanza spalding and members of the Wayne Shorter quartet, in addition to a chamber orchestra, 8 principal singers and a chorus.

November 16 – 21, 2021

ZOO MOTEL

Thaddeus Phillips / Steven Dufala

Live Virtual Event

ArtsEmerson's Digital Venue

A live interactive theatrical event created for the here and now from the studio of theatre director, designer and performer Thaddeus Phillips where he and artist Steven Dufala have transformed the studio into a magical motel room where time stops, mysterious and illuminating stories emerge from across the globe & analog objects take on their own potent meaning.

December 07 – 12, 2021

WHITE RABBIT RED RABBIT

Nassim Soleimanpour

Live Virtual Event

ArtsEmerson's Digital Venue

Forbidden to leave his country, playwright Nassim Soleimanpour distilled the experience of an entire generation in a wild, utterly original play. **White Rabbit Red Rabbit** is a work about contemporary Iran and of Nassim's generation.

February 17 – 20, 2022

OCTAVIA E. BUTLER'S PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Toshi Reagon

Live In-Person Event

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre

Returning to ArtsEmerson as a fully realized staged production after its sold-out 2017 concert experience, **Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower** brings together over 30 original musical anthems and requiems drawn from 200 years of black music to adapt Octavia E. Butler's sci-fi, Afrofuturist masterpiece for the stage.

March 12 – 27, 2022

EVERYDAY LIFE AND OTHER ODDS AND ENDS

WORLD PREMIERE

Sleeping Weazel

Live In-Person Event

Emerson Paramount Center

Interdisciplinary playwright Charlotte Meehan has written **Everyday Life and Other Odds and Ends** as interlocking tragicomic scenes of three diversely cast couples facing progressing Parkinson's disease. These scenes unfold in tandem with onscreen doctors, therapists, and others speaking directly to the audience while the couples onstage enact hilarity, pain, struggle, and little triumphs of will set against the onslaught of disease. **Everyday Life**, above all, is an ode to love.

April 13 – 24, 2022

BURGERZ

Travis Alabanza / Hackney Showroom

Live In-Person Event

Emerson Paramount Center

After someone threw a burger at them and shouted a transphobic slur, performance artist Travis Alabanza became obsessed with burgers. How they are made, how they feel, and smell. How they travel through the air. How the mayonnaise feels on your skin. This show is the climax of their obsession – exploring how trans bodies survive and how, by them reclaiming an act of violence, we can address our own complicity.

May 11 – 22, 2022

SEA SICK

Alanna Mitchell / The Theatre Centre

Live In-Person Event

Emerson Paramount Center

AND Live Virtual Event on May 20, 2022 @ 8:00PM

Written and performed by award-winning science journalist Alanna Mitchell, and directed by Franco Boni and Ravi Jain, **Sea Sick** is a deeply personal solo performance about the state of the global ocean, inspired by Mitchell's book of the same name. On the final Friday evening of the engagement, ArtsEmerson will broadcast a livestream of the performance to be made available virtually to those not attending that performance.

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. Founded in 2010 by Robert J. Orchard — the year the U.S. Census confirmed there was no single cultural majority in Boston — ArtsEmerson is committed to building a cultural institution that reflects the diversity of our city. Our imaginative and globe-spanning live and virtual performances, films, and conversations invites each of us to be part of a Boston that is more creative, equitable, and connected. ArtsEmerson is led by Executive Director, David Howse. For more information visit ArtsEmerson.org.

Emerson College

ArtsEmerson and HowlRound Theatre Commons both operate from within the Emerson College Office of the Arts. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theatre District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in communication and the arts, a mission informed by liberal learning. The College has 3,700 undergraduates and 1,400 graduate students from across the United States and 50 countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than 90 student organizations and performance groups. Emerson is known for its experiential learning programs in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, the Netherlands, London, China, and the Czech Republic as well as its new Global Portals. The College has an active network of 51,000 alumni who hold leadership positions in communication and the arts. For more information, visit Emerson.edu. For media inquiries specific to Emerson College, please contact Michelle Gaseau (E: Michelle_Gaseau@emerson.edu, O: 617-824-3547, C: 617-429-2624).

###