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**Media Contacts:**

Darren DeLuca | [darren@luca-pr.com](mailto:darren@luca-pr.com) | 603-489-7624

Alex DeLuca | [alex@luca-pr.com](mailto:alex@luca-pr.com) | 603-557-7742



## **ARTSEMERSON ANNOUNCES 2024/25 SEASON**

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***FOURTEENTH SEASON PRESENTING CONTEMPORARY WORLD THEATRE TO  
INCLUDE NINE THEATRICAL EVENTS***

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**BROADWAY-BOUND PRISON DANCER: THE MUSICAL** CREATED BY AWARD-WINNING FILIPINOS ROMEO CANDIDO AND CARMEN DE JESUS TO MAKE ITS AMERICAN DEBUT WITH THREE WEEKS OF PERFORMANCES

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ARTSEMERSON WELCOMES BOSTON PREMIERE PIECES FROM BELGIUM (**FIGHT NIGHT**), PUERTO RICO (**ON THE EVE OF ABOLITION**), SOUTH AFRICA (**LIFE & TIMES OF MICHAEL K**), THE UNITED KINGDOM (**IT'S A MOTHERF\*\*KING PLEASURE**), & THE USA (**IN THE SAME TONGUE & ROUGH MAGIC**)

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ARTSEMERSON WILL ALSO CO-PRESENT THE WORLD PREMIERE OF **THE SEASONS** WITH BOSTON LYRIC OPERA AND **UTOPIAN HOTLINE** WITH THE MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

### **SEASON PACKAGES AND GROUP TICKETS ON SALE NOW**

**[Boston, MA – Wednesday, May 22, 2024]** – ArtsEmerson, Boston's leading presenter of contemporary world theater and film, and the professional presenting and producing organization of Emerson College, is thrilled to announce its 2024/25 Season, featuring nine live stage events. The new season continues ArtsEmerson's commitment to international work and celebrating differences, reflecting the vital diversity of our city, and deepening our connection to each other.



**Prison Dancer: The Musical**  
*Photo by Juan Camilo Palacio*



**Life & Times of Michael K**  
*Photo by Fiona MacPherson*

"For fourteen years, ArtsEmerson has been Boston's home for contemporary theatre that is the prompt, and conversation that is the point," says ArtsEmerson Interim Executive Director Ronee Penoi. "Following a historic season of four sold out shows, our 24-25 Season includes a slate of remarkable pieces that make good on our commitment to be a home for difficult conversations around race, incarceration, conflict, our role in the global ecosystem and more, inspired by incredible artists from around the globe. Our hope this season is that all of Boston feels that sense of welcome and invitation to join us on that journey."

The 24/25 Season consists of nine theatrical events: **Rough Magic** (Christopher Rivas), **Fight Night** (Ontroerend Goed), **In the Same Tongue** (Dianne McIntyre, Octopus Theatricals), **On the Eve of Abolition** (Papel Machete, Jorge Díaz), **Life & Times of Michael K** (Baxter Theatre Centre, Handspring Puppet Company), **Prison Dancer: The Musical** (produced by Ana Serrano, Carla Serrano, Jonathan and Hillary Reinis), **It's a Motherf\*\*king Pleasure** (FlawBored), and co-presentations of the World Premiere of **The Seasons** along with the Boston Lyric Opera and **Utopian Hotline** (Theater Mitu, Octopus Theatricals) along with the Museum of Science.

### 24/25 ArtsEmerson Season Packages

ArtsEmerson Season Packages are available for purchase now, providing the public with access to the best seats at the best prices. Full Season Packages save up to 35% off the cost of single tickets and Choose Your Own 4 Show Packages save up to 20% off the cost of single tickets. **The Seasons** and **Utopian Hotline** are not yet available for inclusion in packages; information of ticketing availability for those productions will be announced at a later date. **Rough Magic** is available as an option for the 4 Show Package and can be added on to any Full Season Package at the discounted price of \$16.25 per ticket. Priority access is also now available to those wishing to purchase a group of 10+ tickets for any single performance. To purchase, visit [ArtsEmerson.org](https://www.ArtsEmerson.org) or call the ArtsEmerson Box Office at 617-824-8400 (open Tue-Sat from 12:00PM ET - 6:00PM ET). Those desiring walk-up service may visit the Paramount Center Box Office (559 Washington Street, Boston) Thu-Sat from 12:00PM ET - 6:00PM ET.

### 24/25 ArtsEmerson Season Overview

ArtsEmerson's 24/25 Season will kick off with a special summer engagement and the return of Christopher Rivas (**The Real James Bond...Was Dominican**) with his project **Rough Magic**, which arrives at ArtsEmerson July 12 – 13, 2024. Rivas and Annie Gonzalez harness the gigantic chemistry of this "Is it Love?"-story with a seamless mastery as they take audiences through the maze of a tangled relationship in the new play.

The official season opener will commence with a two-night event, **Fight Night** by Ontroerend Goed, from September 20 – 21, 2024. Through a series of guided prompts and questions, **Fight Night** takes the audience on a journey to choose the best candidate. As each round progresses, the audience learns more information about each candidate that will inform their vote. Random checks, voting signposts, coalitions, campaigns, debates, consultants, exit polls, spin doctors, opinion gauges, list pushers, and referendums will inform the vote – it's an evening mixed with humor and sharp political commentary.

Later in September, a dance legend and a celebrated composer collaborate to explore the powerful connections between and across forms, languages, and histories. From September 26 – 29, 2024, Dianne McIntyre's **In the Same Tongue** will hit the ArtsEmerson stage, reviving the spirit of McIntyre's internationally celebrated company Sounds in Motion. Featuring the poetry of Obie-winning playwright Ntozake Shange, **In the Same Tongue** is a vibrant full-length movement, sound, and language-based work uniting a vigorous company of dancers and musicians to explore how dance and music "speak" to each other, exploring a legacy like that of 1920's Harlem salons and the Black Arts Movement of the 60's & 70's.

Arriving at ArtsEmerson October 31 – November 3, **On the Eve of Abolition** is set in 2047 and draws from the realities of present-day United States and Puerto Rico. In this bilingual, multimedia performance — puppets, video projection, and miniature sets intertwine to transport audiences to a future where prison abolitionists have created the conditions to end the prison industrial complex in the transnational liberated lands of

Southern North America. The story imagines abolition camps, formerly incarcerated people, families, and organizers working in coalition to end all prisons. Developed and performed by artists and collaborators of Papel Machete, this project incorporates community engagement with abolitionist organizations and currently and formerly incarcerated people and their families to create a vision of an abolitionist future. Through partnerships with groups like Prison Radio, **On the Eve of Abolition** offers pathways to engage in real-time organizing toward the abolition of the prison industrial complex.

2025 will kick-off with lifelike marionettes coming alive on stage to depict the trials and tribulations faced by Michael K and his family as they seek to escape political turmoil in **Life & Times of Michael K** at ArtsEmerson from January 31 – February 9, 2025. Lara Foot's adaptation of Booker Prize-winning novel *Life & Times of Michael K*, written by J.M Coetzee, is a poignant piece depicting the arduous struggles that result from intense political conflict. Adapted for the stage by Lara Foot in collaboration with Tony Award-winning Handspring Puppet Company (*War Horse*), protagonist Michael K is charged with the daunting task of moving his ailing mother, Anna, away from their war-torn hometown to the rural South African countryside where she spent her youth. Multi-layered theatrical staging which combines puppetry, performance, film and evocative music bring the celebrated novel to the stage.

Next up arrives the highly anticipated **Prison Dancer: The Musical** following its blockbuster, sold-out run at Ottawa's National Arts Centre (NAC), with ArtsEmerson presenting the musical on its journey to Broadway for a three-week run February 22 – March 16, 2025. From Broadway World to Intermission Magazine the reviewers are raving: "Prison Dancer is mesmerizing..the musical is one you will not soon forget;" "The music is ultra catchy with some songs still stuck in my head;" and "Don't think twice: go see Prison Dancer. It is incredible in ways that can only be enjoyed in a theatre." Romeo Candido (composer and book writer) and Carmen De Jesus (book writer) took inspiration from one of the world's first YouTube viral videos to bring audiences inside the redemption, suffering, and joy that embodies the story told in this incredible new musical. **Prison Dancer** is a modern musical inspired-by-a-true-story about how fears can hold us captive and the power of art and connection can set us free through dance!

Based on "The Four Seasons" – with additional arias and ensembles by Vivaldi – **The Seasons** makes its World Premiere in a co-presentation with Boston Lyric Opera March 12 – 16, 2025. A group of contemporary artists gathers at a nature retreat to make their art. But extreme weather impacts them without warning and changes their lives forever. **The Seasons** is a meditation on the relationship between our contemporary moment and Vivaldi's iconic music, which appreciated the harmonious seasons. Vivaldi's violin masterpiece becomes a launch point from which to see our own disordered seasons more clearly. Co-conceived by Tony Award-winning playwright Sarah Ruhl ("Eurydice") and Grammy-winning countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo, **The Seasons** features a new libretto by Ruhl and Costanzo in a starring role. Directed by Zack Winokur with choreography by Pam Tanowitz. Produced by Boston Lyric Opera, AMOC\* (American Modern Opera Company) and SCENE.

Hot off the back of their smash-hit VAULT Festival and Soho Theatre runs, multi award-winning, disability-led theatre company FlawBored will present a scathing satire on the monetization of identity politics that spares no one at ArtsEmerson called **It's a Motherf\*\*king Pleasure** from April 2 – 13, 2025.

The 24/25 Season closes out May 1 – 18, 2025 at the Charles Hayden Planetarium at the Museum of Science with **Utopian Hotline**. ArtsEmerson and Museum of Science present Theater Mitu's **Utopian Hotline** produced in association with Octopus Theatricals, a piece inspired by the 1977 NASA Voyager mission, which launched the Golden Record into interstellar space, as well as the uncertainty and isolations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. A collaboration with the Museum of Science, this experimental performance begs the question: if we were to send another message into the distant future, what message would we send? Part telephone hotline, vinyl record, and live performance, **Utopian Hotline** uses voicemails and interviews with NASA astronauts, astrophysicists, astronomers, and middle school students to create a moment of community, while inviting audience members to re-imagine our shared future by leaving their own messages on the public telephone hotline.

## **Commitment to Film and Engagement Programming**

The 24/25 Season will continue ArtsEmerson's mission of using the expanded programming of film offerings and screening events at the Emerson Paramount Center's state-of-the-art Bright Family Screening Room. Film programming will include narrative and documentary work screened as part of **Shared Stories** (in partnership with Boston Asian American Film Festival, CineFest Latino Boston, and Roxbury International Film Festival) and **Projecting Connections: Chinese American Experiences** (in partnership with Boston Asian American Film Festival).

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

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 also be returning, marking its 10th Anniversary. PRBC will take place at the Roxbury branch of Boston Public Library and other neighborhood locations and there will also be opportunities to join and participate in virtual clubs during the 24/25 Season.

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 23/24 Season will include signature ArtsEmerson The Point events. ArtsEmerson will also continue to use its public-facing platforms – venue marquees, email communications, social media networks and its [online journal](#), to expand public discourse around topics of urgency to our city, our nation, and our world.

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 2024/25 season, [click here.](#)**

## **24/25 SEASON THEATRICAL EVENTS**

July 12 – 13, 2024

### **Rough Magic**

Christopher Rivas

Brought to you by ArtsEmerson, BrownEnough Productions, Parker Morrison Productions, Annie Gonzalez, and IKIGAI Management & Media

Emerson Paramount Center – Jackie Liebergott Black Box

Chris and Elektra love each other, but they each define love quite differently. He thinks a successful love is “‘til we die.” She thinks it’s “until the candle burns out.” The one thing they agree on is that they’re not good for each other, but no matter how hard they try, neither can seem to let go. Christopher Rivas and Annie Gonzalez harness the gigantic chemistry of this “Is it Love?”-Story with a seamless mastery as they take audiences through the maze of a tangled relationship in the new play **Rough Magic**.

Christopher Rivas is the creator and star of last season's **The Real James Bond... Was Dominican** as well as an author, podcaster, and storyteller best known for his on-screen work on the Fox series, *Call Me Kat*. Annie Gonzalez is an actress, singer, dancer known for her memorable work in the highly-viewed Hulu Original Film, Eva Longoria-directed feature film, *Flamin' Hot*. More recently Gonzalez stars and serves as an Executive Producer for the late Jenni Rivera's biopic “Jenni” for VIX+.

September 20 – 21, 2024

### **Fight Night**

Ontroerend Goed

Emerson Paramount Center – Robert J. Orchard Stage

*Five contenders. Five rounds. Your Vote.*

Ontroerend Goed's **Fight Night** begins with five candidates. At the end of the show, only one will be victorious.

Through a series of guided prompts and questions, **Fight Night**'s host takes you – the audience – on a journey to choose the best candidate. As each round progresses, the audience learns more information about each candidate that will inform their vote. Random checks, voting signposts, coalitions, campaigns, debates, consultants, exit polls, spin doctors, opinion gauges, list pushers, and referendums will inform your vote. The host will do anything to make the best not win. Will the audience choose someone who represents their views? Or will they choose the opposite?

With a mix of humor and sharp political commentary, **Fight Night** is full of twists and turns that will have audiences rethinking how – and why – they vote.

September 26 – 29, 2024

### **In the Same Tongue**

Dianne McIntyre

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre

**In the Same Tongue** is a vibrant full-length movement, sound, and language-based work. Dance legend and choreographer, Dianne McIntyre, unites a vigorous company of dancers and musicians to explore how dance and music “speak” to each other.

Reviving the spirit of McIntyre's internationally celebrated company Sounds in Motion, **In the Same Tongue** explores a legacy like that of 1920s Harlem salons, and the Black Arts Movement of the 60's & 70's, with dynamic dancers, writers, and musicians.

With original music by celebrated composer Diedre Murray, **In the Same Tongue** reveals how language creates worlds of beauty, alienation, harmony, tension, or peace. Dynamic vignettes ignite the stage, including McIntyre's autobiographical stories with “the music”—such as the musical influence of the Black Arts Movement—and feature the poetry of Obie-winning playwright Ntozake Shange.

October 31 – November 3, 2024

### **On the Eve of Abolition**

Papel Machete / Jorge Díaz

Emerson Paramount Center – Robert J. Orchard Stage

**On the Eve of Abolition** is set in 2047 and draws from the realities of present-day United States and Puerto Rico. In this bilingual, multimedia performance — puppets, video projection, and miniature sets intertwine to transport audiences to a future where prison abolitionists have created the conditions to end the prison industrial complex in the transnational liberated lands of Southern North America. The story imagines abolition camps, formerly incarcerated people, families, and organizers working in coalition to end all prisons. Developed and performed by artists and collaborators of Papel Machete, this project incorporates community engagement with abolitionist organizations and currently and formerly incarcerated people and their families to create a vision of an abolitionist future. Through partnerships with groups like Prison Radio, **On the Eve of Abolition** offers pathways to engage in real-time organizing toward the abolition of the prison industrial complex.

January 31 – February 9, 2025

### **Life & Times of Michael K**

A Baxter Theatre Centre and Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus Production

Adapted and directed by Lara Foot In collaboration with Handspring Puppet Company  
Emerson Paramount Center – Robert J. Orchard Stage

Lara Foot's adaptation of Booker Prize-winning novel *Life & Times of Michael K*, written by J.M Coetzee, is a poignant piece depicting the arduous struggles that result from intense political conflict. Protagonist Michael K is charged with the daunting task of moving his ailing mother, Anna, away from their war-torn hometown to the rural South African countryside where she spent her youth.

Though at first, Michael simply accepts this burden to satisfy his filial duties, he soon realizes that the spiritually transformative nature of this trek will allow him to feel more connected with the world around him. Anna's unwavering energy despite the dire nature of their plight imbues their journey with life and a sense of optimism, making it all the more engaging for the audience.

February 22 – March 16, 2025

### **Prison Dancer: The Musical**

Composed and Lyrics by Romeo Candido

Book by Romeo Candido and Carmen De Jesus

Produced by Ana Serrano, Carla Serrano, Jonathan and Hillary Reinis

Developed with support from the National Arts Centre (NAC) National Creation Fund

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre

In 2007, a YouTube video showing the inmates of a maximum-security prison in the Philippines dancing to Michael Jackson's "Thriller" went viral on the internet. Who were these dancers? How and why did they do it? Romeo Candido (composer and book writer) and Carmen De Jesus (book writer) took inspiration from one of the world's first viral videos to bring audiences inside the redemption, suffering, and joy that embodies the story told in this incredible new musical. An award-winning transmedia experience that spans multiple platforms, Broadway-bound **Prison Dancer** is a modern inspired-by-a-true-story about how fears can hold us captive and the power of art and connection can set us free through dance.

"Ottawa audiences have never seen anything like Prison Dancer," says David Abel, Managing Director of English Theatre at the NAC. "To end our run with totally sold-out performances is one thing. To have diverse, multi-generational audiences actively participate in the musical leaving the NAC smiling and dancing is another thing altogether and truly magical." (*Boston Herald*)

"Take my advice and have "no regrets" - don't miss your chance to see Prison Dancer the Musical." (*Broadway World*)

"This one is going places, folks; go see it so you can tell people you did before it inevitably hits Broadway." (*Edmonton Journal*)

March 12 – 16, 2025

### **The Seasons**

Co-presented with Boston Lyric Opera. Produced by Boston Lyric Opera, AMOC\* (American Modern Opera Company) and SCENE.

Emerson Paramount Center – Robert J. Orchard Stage

This World Premiere is a bold reimagining of Antonio Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons," with additional arias and ensembles by the composer, woven into a new libretto by Tony-winning playwright Sarah Ruhl ("Eurydice") and featuring Grammy-winning countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo. Co-conceived by Ruhl and Costanzo, and directed by Zack Winokur with choreography by Pam Tanowitz. Described by Ruhl as "a contemporary Baroque opera about the weather, inside and out," it tells the story of five artists who retreat to a remote farm to make art inspired by the beauty of nature. But increasingly extreme and erratic weather complicates the plan. Hope arrives in an unexpected form, delivering a bright future.

April 2 – 13, 2025

## **It's a Motherf\*\*king Pleasure**

FlawBored

Emerson Paramount Center – Jackie Liebergott Black Box

*Usually disabled people want to do the right thing. But what if they don't?*

*What if they were out to make as much money as possible from the guilt of non-disabled, anxious people (like you)?*

Hot off the back of their smash-hit Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Soho Theatre runs, multi award-winning, disability-led theatre company FlawBored present a scathing satire on the monetisation of identity politics that spares no one.

May 1 – 18, 2025

## **Utopian Hotline**

Theater Mitu / Octopus Theatricals

Museum of Science – Hayden Planetarium

Step into the cosmic conversation with Theater Mitu's latest creation. Inspired by the 1977 NASA Voyager mission, which launched the Golden Record into interstellar space, as well as the uncertainty and isolations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, this experimental performance begs the question: if we were to send another message into the distant future, what message would we send?

Part telephone hotline, vinyl record, and live performance, **Utopian Hotline** uses voicemails and interviews with NASA astronauts, astrophysicists, astronomers, and middle school students to create a moment of community, while inviting audience members to re-imagine our shared future by leaving their own messages on the public telephone hotline.

ArtsEmerson and Museum of Science present Theater Mitu's **Utopian Hotline**, produced in association with Octopus Theatricals. This collaborative performance, done in partnership with SETI Institute, Arizona State University's Interplanetary Initiative, and Brooklyn Independent Middle School, is a call for audiences to join together and leave an offering of hope for the future of humanity.

## **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 Interim Executive Director of the Office of the Arts & ArtsEmerson Director of Artistic Programming, Ronee Penoi. For more information visit [ArtsEmerson.org](https://www.ArtsEmerson.org).

### **Emerson College**

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 approximately 4,161 undergraduates and 554 graduate students from across the United States and nearly 70 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 at Emerson Los Angeles, located in Hollywood, and at its 14th-century castle, in the Netherlands. Additionally, there are opportunities to study in Washington, DC, London, China, and the Czech Republic, Spain, Austria,

Greece, France, Ireland, Mexico, Cuba, England, and South Africa. 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](http://emerson.edu). For media inquiries specific to Emerson College, please contact Michelle Gaseau (E: [Michelle\\_Gaseau@emerson.edu](mailto:Michelle_Gaseau@emerson.edu), O: 617-824-3547, C: 617-429-2624).

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