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NEW VICTORY ANNOUNCES THEIR 2021-22 SEASON AND 2021-22 NEW VICTORY LABWORKS ARTISTS

New Victory Will Celebrate The Holiday Season With Jim Henson's Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas



*Thomas Cannizarro and David Stephens in Jim Henson's Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas
Photo By: Diane Sobolewski*

July 22, 2021 - Today, New Victory announced their upcoming 2021-22 season, which will include holiday performances of **Jim Henson's Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas**, directed by Christopher Gattelli (*NEWSIES*). This season will see a return to in-person performances at the New Victory Theater, as well as the opportunity for guests to stream the season in their homes.

Along with the announcement of their new season, New Victory is also announcing **Nehprii Amenii**, **Ty Defoe**, **Indygo Afi Ngozi** and **Marcus Yi** as the theater's 2021-22 New Victory LabWorks Artists and **Christopher Rudd** as the inaugural participant of New Victory LabWorks Launch.

“In the season ahead, we maintain our commitment to making performing arts more accessible for New York kids and families in the safest ways possible to create a cultural destination, both in person and online, that is meaningful, magical and a beacon of how the performing arts help our communities thrive,” said New 42 President & CEO Russell Granet.

The 2021-22 season will begin on November 5 with the onstage world premiere of ***Generation Rise***, running through November 14. *Generation Rise* is presented by Ping Chong and Company in association with New 42/New Victory, developed in collaboration with Urban Word NYC, and inspired by the critically acclaimed *Generation NYZ* (New Victory 2018). Written and directed by Sara Zatz and Kirya Traber, *Generation Rise* is an interview-based production featuring Black, Latinx and Asian American teens from New York City telling their own stories and reflecting on their lives before, during and after 2020—a year of crisis and transformation.

New Victory will also celebrate the holiday season with the New York City premiere of ***Jim Henson’s Emmet Otter’s Jug-Band Christmas***, which will begin performances on December 10 and run until January 2, 2022. Based on the book by Russell and Lillian Hoban, and Jim Henson’s popular classic holiday special, the show follows Emmet Otter and his Ma as they enter a Christmas Eve talent contest hoping to win prize money to buy each other holiday gifts. This stage adaptation by iTheatrics in association with The Jim Henson Company features a lovable mix of performers and puppet characters from the world-renowned Jim Henson’s Creature Shop, with book by Timothy Allen McDonald and Christopher Gattelli and a toe-tapping score by Academy Award winner Paul Williams. Directed and choreographed by Gattelli (Tony Award, *NEWSIES*), this show is sure to become a heartwarming holiday tradition.

Tickets for ***Generation Rise*** and ***Jim Henson’s Emmet Otter’s Jug-Band Christmas*** go on sale on September 29 at [NewVictory.org](https://www.newvictory.org).

Following their respective sold-out runs at New Victory, ***Air Play*** and ***Step Afrika!*** will return for highly anticipated limited engagements in 2022. Additionally, Nambi E. Kelley’s ***Jabari Dreams of Freedom*** and Manual Cinema’s ***Leonardo and Sam: The Terrible Monster and the Most Scaredy-Cat Kid in the Whole World, Respectively***, inspired by the work of Mo Willems, will make their New York Stage premieres at the New Victory.

“The new season is as joyful as it is impactful, embracing the values and beliefs we are engaged in as an organization with shows reflecting themes of inclusivity, belonging and how we can work through scary moments to help and heal each other,” said Mary Rose Lloyd, Artistic Director at New 42.

Air Play, returning February 11 through March 6, is a circus-style adventure of two siblings on a journey through a surreal land of air, which transforms ordinary objects into uncommon beauty. Created by Acrobuffos circus performers Seth Bloom and Christina Gelsone in collaboration with kinetic sculptor Daniel Wurtzel, *Air Play* was devised through years of experimentation with simple materials, movement and technology. *Air Play* creates beauty and inspires laughter across cultures and continents. No translation necessary, *Air Play* has played from the

southernmost opera house in the world in Chile, to London's Royal Festival Hall, Melbourne's State Theatre, Shanghai's Grand Theatre and continues to tour.

Jabari Dreams of Freedom, running from March 25 through April 3, uses rap, freedom songs, hip-hop dance, history and humor to tell the story of a young Black boy from the South Side of Chicago who is afraid to leave the house. With his Forever President Barack Obama as a guide, Jabari escapes the violent reality of an encounter with the police through his colorful paintings where he meets children from the past who teach him how to be fearless. Written by New Victory LabWorks Artist Nambi E. Kelley (Toni Morrison's *Jazz*, *Native Son* at The Duke on 42nd Street) and produced by First Woman, this play explores through the lessons of the children of the Civil Rights Era what it means for Black boys, and Black children, to live freely.

Step Afrika! returns April 20 through May 8, with new works centered around ***Drumfolk***, a high-energy exploration of the body as a drum and a versatile percussive instrument. One of the most celebrated African American dance companies in the world today, Step Afrika!'s work chronicles and celebrates the African experience in America. Grounded in extensive research and over two decades of percussive practice and investigation, excerpts from *Drumfolk* reveal hidden histories and events that transformed American life and demonstrate the unlimited artistic possibilities of the art form of stepping.

Leonardo and Sam: The Terrible Monster and the Most Scaredy-Cat Kid in the Whole World, Respectively, running from June 4 through June 26, tells the story of a monster who longs to be scary and the big decisions about identity and empathy that all monsters must make. Adapted from the beloved children's books by Mo Willems, the story of *Leonardo and Sam* is realized through mind-bending projection, DIY cinema, music and immersive sound by critically-acclaimed multimedia artists of Manual Cinema.

Tickets for the Spring 2022 productions of ***Air Play***, ***Jabari Dreams of Freedom***, **Step Afrika!** and ***Leonardo and Sam*** go on sale December 8 at [NewVictory.org](https://www.newvictory.org).



2021-22 New Victory LabWorks Artists, Pictured left to right: Indygo Afi Ngozi, Marcus Yi, Nehprii Amenii, Ty Defoe

New Victory has named **Nehprii Amenii**, **Ty Defoe**, **Indygo Afi Ngozi** and **Marcus Yi** as the theater's 2021-22 New Victory LabWorks Artists. As reestablished in 2020, New Victory LabWorks serves artists who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC),

including artists with disabilities and artists who identify as LGBTQIA+, in the creation of adventurous performing arts for family audiences by offering resources and experiences tailored to each artist's individual creative processes. Offerings include a fee of \$15,000, professional development, networking, and community support. The program also offers the opportunity to hold invited rehearsals for industry professionals, fellow artists and New Victory kid and family audiences with facilitated feedback sessions.

The theater has also announced **Christopher Rudd** as the inaugural participant of New Victory LabWorks Launch, the program's continued support for a single artist as they further develop a particular project for young audiences, with the aim of presenting the work as part of a future New Victory season. New Victory LabWorks Launch allows for the artist to continue to receive the individualized support of the program with a focus on what will take their theatrical work to the stage through production support, dramaturgical support, industry relationship connections, rehearsal space and a fee of \$5,000.

Tickets for this exciting upcoming season go on sale soon at NewVictory.org. Tickets for **Generation Rise** and **Jim Henson's Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas** can be purchased starting September 29. Tickets for **Air Play**, **Jabari Dreams of Freedom**, **Step Afrika!** and **Leonardo and Sam** go on sale December 8.

At New 42, the safety of New Victory patrons, students, artists and staff is of highest priority. The nonprofit continues to monitor and follow guidelines and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and New York State Department of Health for the venue's development and refinement of Covid-19 safety practices and policies to ensure a safe and clean experience for everyone. New 42 continues to update best practices and plans as circumstances and guidelines change and will release policies around specific shows at the time of their on-sale dates.

About New Victory Theater

The New Victory opens new worlds to young people and families through extraordinary performances, education and engagement programs. Bringing kids to the arts and the arts to kids since 1995, this nonprofit theater has become a standard-bearer of quality performing arts for young audiences in the United States. Reflecting and serving the multicultural city it calls home, The New Victory is committed to arts access for all communities of New York to experience and engage with the exemplary international shows on its stages. A global leader in arts education, youth development and audience engagement, the New Victory Theater has been honored by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, by Americans for the Arts with a national Arts Education Award, and by the Drama Desk for "providing enchanting, sophisticated children's theater that appeals to the child in all of us, and for nurturing a love of theater in young people."

About New 42

Under the leadership of President & CEO Russell Granet, New 42 is a cultural nonprofit whose mission is to make extraordinary performing arts a vital part of everyone's life from the earliest

years onward. Driven by a deep commitment to performing arts access, New 42 connects people to world-class performances, essential education and employment programs, and creative communities that push culture forward. Through New Victory and New 42 Studios, the nonprofit serves artists, educators and New Yorkers of all ages with invaluable arts engagement and resources in and beyond the performing arts. Together with our supporters, New 42 opens new perspectives, incubates new works and creates new opportunities to move us all.

About the 2021-2022 LabWorks Artists And LabWorks Launch Recipient

Nehprie Amenii is a director, award-winning playwright, puppeteer and educator. She's worked with Bread and Puppet Theater, Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, La Mama and The New York Philharmonic, among others. **Ty Defoe** is a writer, interdisciplinary artist and Grammy Award winner, and a recipient of a 2021 New York Community Trust's Helen Merrill Award for Playwriting. His Broadway credits include Young Jean Lee's *Straight White Men* and he has also appeared in the Netflix show *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*. **Indygo Afi Ngozi** is an interdisciplinary and multidimensional movement artist and choreographer who seeks to create work that continues to investigate the nuances found in the intersectionality between choreography, poetry and vulnerability. **Marcus Yi** is an award-winning musical theater writer/composer/director and performer based in New York. Marcus was named one of Indie Theater Now's 2014 People of the Year, is an Indie Theater Now Playwright and an inaugural member of the 92nd Street Y Musical Theater Development Lab Collective.

Christopher Rudd is a Jamaican-born dance-maker and 2019 Guggenheim Fellow who credits the Thomas Armour Youth Ballet, Dance Theater of Harlem and New World School of the Arts for his performance career. Highlights include dancing for Les Grands Ballet Canadiens de Montréal and Cirque du Soleil. He founded RudduR Dance in 2015 to accomplish the goal of bettering the world through dance. Rudd has also made headlines by creating TOUCHÉ, an interracial homosexual pas de deux, for American Ballet Theatre.