

UMassAmherst

Fine Arts Center

*Sandglass Theater Company*

**Rock the Boat**

**Sunday, November 22, 3:00 p.m. ET**

Online Video Premiere followed by Live Artist Talkback



Photo credit: Willow O'Feral



The UMass Fine Arts Center is supported by the New England Foundation for the Arts through the New England Arts Resilience Fund, part of the United States Regional Arts Resilience Fund, an initiative of the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with major funding from the federal CARES Act from the National Endowment for the Arts.

**UMass Amherst occupies the traditional land of the Nonotuck tribe.** We would also like to acknowledge our neighboring Indigenous nations: the Nipmuc and the Wampanoag to the East, the Mohegan and Pequot to the South, the Mohican to the West, and the Abenaki to the North.

The UMass Fine Arts Center presentation of *Rock the Boat* by Sandglass Theater is sponsored by:



**LoomisVillage**  
A member of The Loomis Communities



**Applewood**  
A member of The Loomis Communities



**PeoplesBank**

# ROCK THE BOAT

## THE CREATIVE TEAM

Eric Bass, Director

Ines Zeller Bass, Co-Founding Director, Puppets

D. Colin, Poetry

Julian Gerstin, Music

Jana Zeller, Puppets

## PERFORMERS

Shoshana Bass, Performer

Kalob Martinez, Performer

Kaitee Yaeko Tredway, Performer

## Film by Haptic Pictures

The *Rock the Boat* film is a commissioned project underwritten by UMass Fine Arts Center as part of our REIMAGINE RESIDENCIES SERIES, a new residency program working with nationally-recognized artists, and dedicated to addressing contemporary social issues through performance, education, and outreach activities. More deeply, artists are asked what it means to be engaged with their art form as well as community and the public in this historical moment, and to allow that inquiry to serve as the impetus behind their residency.

Rock the Boat is funded in part by grants from The National Endowment for the Arts, The Bay & Paul Foundation and all those who generously contributed to our Indiegogo campaign.

Sandglass Theater operations are supported the New England Foundation for the Arts through the New England Arts Resilience Fund, part of the United States Regional Arts Resilience Fund, an initiative of the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with major funding from the federal CARES Act from the National Endowment for the Arts. And by the generous contributions of The Bay & Paul Foundation, Chroma Technologies, The Clowes Fund, the Jim Henson Foundation, the McKenzie Family Charitable Trust, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Vermont Arts Council, the Vermont Humanities Council, the State of Vermont Emergency Grant and individual donors.

## **About *Rock the Boat***

A Poet in a boat, alone at sea, is stuck in a rut of writer's block. While observing his daily routines, he suddenly finds his home filling with new characters seeking shelter and safety. Through evocative visual scenes, we learn that each has fled some disaster: war, fire or flood. As the newcomers and the Poet navigate life together on the vessel, they meet conflict, generosity, kindness and questions about who each other are. The Poet's poems become richer and deeper, and the unlikely collection of beings learn to steer threatening waters together.

***Rock the Boat*** was developed by a multi-ethnic ensemble including slam-poet D. Colin, composer Julian Gerstin and students from two elementary schools in Southern Vermont. Work with students included workshops in poetry, listening practice and music led by members of the creative team. The student's voices contributed to the script, development of a study guide and touring residency model.

***Rock the Boat*** aims to get young audiences thinking about relocation, displacement and the interconnectedness of racial, climate and social justice. The production addresses attitudes about acceptance of those who come from other countries and cultures, and provides a narrative in which there is room for everyone in an inclusive society.

## **Biographies**

**Eric Bass, Director-** Eric has worked for thirty years as a director, playwright, performer, and mask and puppet maker. In 1982, Eric co-founded Sandglass Theater in Munich, Germany, with his wife, Ines Zeller Bass. In 1991, he was awarded the Figurentheater Prize of the City of Erlangen, Germany for his contributions to the field of puppet theater. In 2010, Eric and Ines Zeller Bass received the Vermont Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. He co-directed *The Story of the Dog*, a collaborative piece between Sandglass Theater and Sovanna Phum Theater in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, which toured Cambodia in 2005 and the US in 2006. He co-directed *Natan el Sabio*, a collaborative project with Teatro Luis Poma in El Salvador. Eric toured in the Sandglass production of *D-Generation*, a piece about people with dementia. Eric is also co-director for the original Sandglass production of *Babylon*. He served on the board of the Network of Ensemble Theaters.

**Ines Zeller Bass, Co-Founding Director-**Ines Zeller Bass, Co-Founding Artistic Director of Sandglass, has been performing with puppets since 1968, when she became a member of the Munich marionette theater, Kleines Spiel. In 1978, she created her children's hand puppet theater, Punschi, which toured Europe, Australia and the US. In 1982, Ines co-founded Sandglass Theater with husband Eric. Ines started Sandglass Theater's program for family audiences. Together with Eric, she teaches their approach to puppetry performance and devised composition in workshops in Vermont and abroad. She designed the puppets and set for *Natan El Sabio*, a collaborative project with Teatro Luis Poma in El Salvador. Ines' puppets and design for *Babylon*, Sandglass Theater's newest production, include two of her many crankies. Ines toured in the Sandglass production of *D-Generation*, a piece about people with dementia. An UNIMA citation winner, Ines also received the Vermont Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts in 2010.

**D. Colin, Writer**-Danielle Colin has been writing poetry since age 11. As a teenager, Danielle's poetry was a personal outlet and rarely shared with others. Danielle has B.A. in English, with concentrations in African American literature and creative writing. She also holds Masters degrees in English and in Africana Studies, concentrating in African American literature and creative writing. Her poetry work has also involved teaching poetry workshops especially for teenagers. Danielle was the poet-in-residence for Sandglass' 2016 Voices of Community Week. Her poetry strongly expresses her feelings, insights, and imagery as a child of Haitian immigrants. This poetic style dovetails with Sandglass' own precise and evocative use of puppetry. Sandglass' production, "Rock the Boat," will be written in Danielle's voice, capturing the narrative style of a Haitian-American slam poet. Using this voice helps young audiences connect with the play's themes, and poses the question: What can WE do to help?

**Julian Gerstin, Composer**-Julian has performed and studied a wide variety of music for over 40 years. His main styles are traditions of Martinique, Cuba, Ghana (Ewe) and Brazil; popular music from those same countries as well as Nigeria, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and other Caribbean islands; Balkan music; and jazz. He has performed styles ranging from punk to

**Shoshana Bass, Performer**-Shoshana refers to herself as one of the "daughters of sand", and has just assumed the role of Co-Artistic Director at Sandglass Theater. Having been raised in a traveling family of internationally acclaimed puppeteers, she has spent her life witnessing and in dialogue with artistic voices of diverse cultures, heritages, and perspectives. Her performance mediums range throughout theater, dance, circus and puppetry which makes her an enthusiastic and flexible collaborator. She is a graduate of Naropa University with an Interdisciplinary degree in performing arts, peace studies and tai chi. Shoshana has performed and choreographed in Poland, the Virgin Islands, Germany, and the United States. She tours internationally with three Sandglass productions for both adults and family audiences.

**Kalob Martinez, Performer**-Kalob has performed with Connecticut Repertory Theatre, Alley Theatre (Houston), Main Street Theatre (Houston), Houston Shakespeare Festival, and was an Associate Artist for the Classical Theatre Company (Houston) 2009-2013. He is an MFA candidate in the Puppet Arts Program at the University of Connecticut, where he created his solo production, "El Beto," based on Shakespeare's MacBeth. Kalob is also a Fight Choreographer. Kalob is also a core ensemble member in Sandglass' production of Babylon and has been essential to developing the project from its first creation period.

**Kaitee Yaeko Tredway, Performer**-Kaitee Tredway is a Boston-based puppeteer and actor. She is an alumna of the National Puppetry Festival at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, where she has studied with international puppet artists Hugo & Ines, and Yael Rasooly. She has performed original short-form puppet pieces at the Puppet Showplace Slam, Puppet Playlist, and Drama of Works Kamikazee Slam. This October, she will be part of the puppeteer ensemble in Martin P. Robinson's new Halloween musical, All Hallows' Eve.

A study guide with content provided by Sandglass Theater Company for educator and parent/guardian use is available on our website. Please click [here](#).