

National Sawdust, a New Concert Hall, to Open in Williamsburg in October

By MICHAEL COOPER MAY 8, 2015 11:49 AM [1 Comment](#)

The transformation of a century-old sawdust factory in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, into a new music center is nearly complete: organizers said Friday that the hall, [National Sawdust](#), would open this fall and host three concerts in the New York Philharmonic's Contact! series.

The new venue — which is envisioned as a concert hall, nightclub and recording studio and musical hangout — will work with contemporary composers and establish partnerships with some of the city's top cultural institutions, including the Philharmonic.

Esa-Pekka Salonen will be the host of the first Contact! concert held at National Sawdust, on Nov. 16, which will be called "Salonen's Floop and Other Delights." The second, on Feb. 1, will feature works by young American composers including Adam Schoenberg, Nathan Heidelberg, Caroline Mallonée and Kate Soper. The last, on March 7, will feature chamber music by Olivier Messiaen and composers he influenced, and be hosted by Mr. Salonen.

The concerts will bring wide attention to the new venue, which was known during the planning process as the Original Music Workshop. It changed its name to the decidedly less-generic sounding National Sawdust to reflect the origins of the Brooklyn building it is transforming into a 13,000-square-foot music space as part of a \$16 million project.

While the rest of the first year's programming has not been announced, the artists in residence for the inaugural season give an idea of the scope of its eclecticism. National Sawdust said that its first class of artists in residence would include veterans of New York's music scene including Beth Morrison Projects and Brooklyn Rider; as well as [Ib1](#), a Norwegian string ensemble; [Hotel Elefant](#), the new music group, and Netsayi, a Zimbabwean singer-songwriter.

Paola Prestini, a composer who is the creative and executive director of National Sawdust, called the chance to lead the space "a dream come true." She will develop programming along with a lineup of advisers that span many genres, including the composers Anna Clyne, David T. Little and Nico Muhly; musicians including the pianist Simone Dinnerstein and the countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo; and musicians from the worlds of rock and pop including Bryce Dessner of The National and Richard Reed Parry of Arcade Fire.



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