

# Marisa Michelson &

## CONSTELLATION CHOR

MARISA MICHELSON is a singer, improviser, educator, and composer of Musicals, Choral Works, and Music-Theatre.

She is an active and accomplished somatic voice practitioner, performer, and composer with extensive experience in: private studio teaching (over 17 years), with many successful students on Broadway and pursuing other careers in voice, performance and healing arts; forming and maintaining groups, including *Constellation Chor || an immersion in voice, movement and spirit*, and Core Sounding™, a practice and process for improvisation; and composing, with compositions and musicals which have received substantial grant funding and critical praise.

*Constellation Chor* has been in residence at the historic Judson Memorial Church, Spectrum and Pioneer Works. The *Chor's* collaborators include Claire Chase, Sarah Hennies, Ash Fure, the New York Philharmonic, the Kitchen, Heartbeat Opera, Harvard Art Lab, Maria Popova, Paola Prestini, and Sara Serpa (among others). Marisa's compositions have been called "exquisite" (*The New York Times*), "otherworldly" (Steven Suskin), "gorgeous...adventurous" (Vox Magazine). Her off-Broadway musicals include *Tamar of the River* (Prospect Theater; two Drama Desk Nominations) and *One Thousand Nights and One Day* (Prospect Theatre, ART NY). *Naamah's Ark*, her oratorio for five choirs starring Victoria Clark (River to River festival in Rockefeller Park) was conducted by Ted Sperling. *Awards & grants include:* Jonathan Larson Award, National Endowment for the Arts, New Dramatists, The Foundation for Contemporary Arts, the inaugural Eric Salzman Award for Music-Theater, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. *Residencies include:* National Sawdust, MacDowell, Ucross, Modern Accord Depot, Blue Mountain Center, New Dramatists.

Marisa has founded the School of Vocal De-Arming (VoDe), an offshoot of the Libero Canto School of Singing, an approach to singing and voice-giving that invites intimate connection with the layered dimensions of Self, not only in service of freer singing, but also in service of healing, self-growth, sexuality, and spiritual inquiry. Vo-De is not focused on particular aesthetic sound outcomes (although aesthetic improvement - which is subjective - is a certain byproduct) but, instead, on self-connection and on learning to sing from a place of ever-changing Truth. At the same time, Vo-De practices absolutely and without question help a person develop musical and vocal skill and as they advance along a path towards mastery.

Marisa lives, works and teaches singing in New York City and Hudson, NY.

### **Constellation Chor || an immersion in voice, movement, and spirit**

Founder & Director, Composer

2015-2024

### **PERFORMANCES & PERFORMANCE PROJECTS**

**Constellation Chor EP and non-formance, Porches at Mass Moca** September, 2023  
Audio recording of our improvisations with original and new ensemble members in preparation for an EP and installation; Producer: William Britelle

**Reservoir 2: Intrusion, Porches at Mass Moca** May 27, 2022  
Audio recording of the piece composed by Sarah Hennies for bass flute and five or more voices for Claire Chase's Density 2036: part vi

**Biophony, Brooklyn Botanical Gardens** September 18, 2021  
Live performances of pieces commissioned by the Metropolis Ensemble

**Beneath the Surface, National Sawdust** April 21, 2021  
Short film produced by National Sawdust and Pioneer Works, co-created with Miriam Parker: Film by Mariam Parker; Music and Performance by Marisa Michelson  
Sung and performed by *Constellation Chor*

**Tree of 40 Fruit, Pioneer Works** October 3, 2020  
Music by Paola Prestini written for a tree planting ceremony at *Pioneer Works* initiated and produced by Maria Popova

**Claire Chase: Density 2036, part vi, Harvard ArtLab** November 7, 2020  
- Reservoir 2: *Intrusion* by Sarah Hennies, twenty minute version of the hour-long piece written for Claire Chase and *Constellation Chor*

**Vouvoussa Festival, Greece** July 17, 2019  
*Sappho Fragments* by Marisa Michelson  
Performed by Marisa Michelson and *Constellation Chor*

**Reservoir 2: Intrusion, The Kitchen, NYC** March 1-2, 2019  
Composition by Sarah Hennies for bass flute and five or more voices for Claire Chase's Density 2036: part vi (2018-19)

**Filament, David Geffen Hall, Lincoln Center** September 19-25, 2018  
Composed by Ash Fure  
World premiere with the New York Philharmonic, composed for *Constellation Chor*; conducted by Jaap van Zweden

**Desire | Divinity Project Parts I & II, Judson Memorial Church, NYC** February 1-3, 2018  
*Song of Song of Songs* and *Sappho Fragments* by Marisa Michelson  
Marisa Michelson and Heath Saunders, Lead Performers

## OTHER SELECTED COMPOSITIONS & PERFORMANCES

**Agrol Agra, Vocal Quartet** 2018 - present  
Singers: Kinga Cserjési, Deborah Carmichael, Marisa Michelson, Margot Bassett (formerly Sara Serpa)  
Singing Hungarian Folk Music and Arrangements of Hungarian Folk Songs by Bela Bartok

*Performances at the Hungarian House, NYC*

*Upcoming "The Owl" in Brooklyn, Metabee Farm in Hawthorne Valley, NY*

***One Thousand Nights and One Day, Prospect Theatre Company, NYC***

April 1-30, 2018

Book and Lyrics by Jason Grote

Music and Vocal Philosophy by Marisa Michelson

***Naamah's Ark: A retelling of Noah's Ark from his wife's point of view***

Music and Additional Text by Marisa Michelson

Text by Royce Vavrek

An Oratorio for 200 singers (Professional SATB Choir, Gospel Choir, Children's Choir, Hispanic Choir, Soloist, Barbershop Quartet, Drummers with Disabilities) and Chamber Orchestra

Commissioned by Ted Sperling's *MasterVoices*, Conducted by Ted Sperling

*Headlined the River to River Festival in Rockefeller park, starred Victoria Clark*

2018

*University of Southern Utah, Salt Lake City for the National Opera Association*

2019

*Premiered at Anche Chesed Synagogue, NYC*

2016

***Tamar of the River, Prospect Theater Company, NYC***

September - October, 2013

Conception, Music, and Book by Marisa Michelson

Book and Lyrics by Joshua H. Cohen

For 13 mixed voices, piano, violin/viola, cello, hammered dulcimer, percussion: djembe, conga, udu, glockenspiel, and vibraphone

***The Other Room, a one-woman opera***

Libretto by Mark Campbell

Composed by Marisa Michelson

*The Studios of Key West, starred Molly Ranson*

2020

*Arbeit Opera Theatre, Minneapolis, starred Victoria Vargas*

2019

*Inner Voices, NYC, starred Phoebe Strole*

2014

***Voice Becoming, Basilica in Hudson, NY and then toured to the Goetheanum, Switzerland***

2012

Co-creators and Performers: Marisa Michelson and Faye Shapiro

***Meredith Monk's Songs of Ascension, Brooklyn Academy of Music***

2009

Chorus Section Leader and Singer

***Edith Stein, an opera based on Arthur Giron's play, St. Peter's Church, NYC***

August, 2007

Music by John Andrew Tarbet

Words by Jonathan Gilbert

Edith Stein sung by Marisa Michelson

***Ophelia: Opera in Blue*, Prospect Theatre Company, NYC**

May, 2007

Composed by Sergei Dreznin

Ophelia performed by Marisa Michelson

***Still Life with Toe Shoes***

Music and Co-Book by Marisa Michelson

Lyrics and Co-Book by Joshua H. Cohen

90-minute original musical for 8 female voices, piano and 1 silent male dancer

*Emerson College*

2011

*Old Deerfield Productions, MA*

2008

## AWARDS, RESIDENCIES, GRANTS & DISCOGRAPHY

### RESIDENCIES

**Judson Memorial Church Residency, NYC**

2016 – Present

Weekly *Constellation Chor* practice at Judson every Friday morning

**Pioneer Works Residency**

March 2021

**Modern Accord Depot Residency**

April 2021

**Spectrum Residency, Brooklyn, NY**

2019

**National Endowment for the Arts**

2018

For Marisa Michelson's *One Thousand Nights and One Day* (Prospect Theater Company)

**MacDowell Colony**

2015

**Ucross Foundation**

2015

### AWARDS & GRANTS

**Virginia B. Toulmin Fellow, National Sawdust x CBA (Center for Ballet Arts)**

2021

Awarded to Chor Director Marisa Michelson

**Eric Salzman Award for New Music-Theater Composition**

2018

Awarded to Chor Director Marisa Michelson

**Creative Engagement Award, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council**

2017

For Marisa Michelson's *Desire | Divinity* Project

**Jonathan Larson Award Winner**

2011

**American Musical Voices Project: the Next Generation**

2009

Commission from the Shen Family Foundation to create an original full-length musical for the Tony-Award Winning Signature Theatre (Arlington, VA)

### DISCOGRAPHY

***Sappho Fragments***

2025

Music by Marisa Michelson

Sung by Marisa Michelson and Constellation Chor

***Tree of 40 Fruit*** 2020  
From *Con Alma* (Compilation Album)  
Music by Paola Prestini, Words by Magos Herrera  
Sung by Marisa Michelson

***Reservoir II*** 2019  
From *Density 2036, Part 6 (Compilation Album)*  
Music by Sarah Hennies, Flute by Claire Chase  
Sung by Constellation Chor

***Tamar of the River*** 2014  
Music by Marisa Michelson  
Off-Broadway Cast Album Recording with *Yellow Sound Label*

## EDUCATION & CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

[Libero Canto School for Singing](#) - Twenty years practice as a student and apprentice under Deborah Carmichael and full-time teacher for the past 17 years

Certificate in Integrative Somatic Trauma Therapy (Embody Lab) 2021  
Akashic Records Mentorship 2023  
New Dramatists Composer-Librettist Studio 2008  
BFA, Musical Theatre performance, NYU Tisch School of the Arts 2001 - 2004