



Individual Artist Fellowships

2023 Performing Arts Recipients

* first time recipients

\$2,500

Gregory Simon (Lincoln) Music/Sound*
Charles Fairbanks (Eustis) Videography/Screenwriting*
Allegra Hangen (Omaha) Videography/Screenwriting*
Lauren Simpson (Omaha) Choreography*

\$2,000

Mary Lawson (Lincoln) Music/Sound*
Gayle Rocz (Omaha) Choreography*
Lauren Bonk (Kearney) Theater/Playwriting*
Brian Guehring (Omaha) Theater/Playwriting
Nathan Brumbaugh (Omaha) Choreography*

Following pages include Artist Biographies and Select Application Images.

Gregory Simon, www.gregsimonmusic.com



Greg is currently Associate Professor of Composition and Jazz Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he directs the Flyover New Music Series and the UNL Jazz Orchestra. During the summer, he serves on the composition artist-faculty at the Brevard Music Center. He also currently serves as co-chair of Region VI for the Society of Composers, Inc. Greg's works have been performed by ensembles and performers around the world, including the Ju Percussion Group, Alarm Will Sound, the Moanin' Frogs, and the Nu Deco Ensemble. Greg's artistic work and process have been featured in Nebraska Stories from Nebraska Public Media and the documentary Madang - A Creative Journey.

Exhibitions featuring his collaborative work have taken place in the Sheldon Museum of Art, the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, and the Everson Museum of Art. Greg's compositions have been recorded on labels including 4Tay, MSR Classics, Blue Griffin, Equilibrium, Open G, SMS Classical, and Terpsichore. He is the recipient of awards for achievement in composition from the Zodiac International Music Festival, the Moscow Conservatory, National Association of Composers/USA, and the Esoterics.

As a jazz musician, Greg studied with Bill Lucas, Ellen Rowe, and Brad Goode. He has performed with the Marcus Lewis Big Band, the Shawn Bell Quartet, the Rhythm Society Orchestra, Late Night Menu, and many others, at venues ranging from Dazzle Jazz Club to the Jewell of Omaha; and played in the bands of The Temptations, Hannah Huston, and Andrew Dost of fun.

Currently, Greg plays trumpet/flugelhorn alongside his colleagues in the UNL Faculty Jazz Ensemble and serves as the director of the UNL Jazz Orchestra. Greg has taught jazz with the Detroit Symphony Civic Jazz Orchestra and Omaha Performing Arts Academy, and served as guest clinician at the Westside Jazz Festival and the Nebraska State Band Association's Jazz Festival.

Charles Fairbanks, <https://charlesfairbanks.info/>

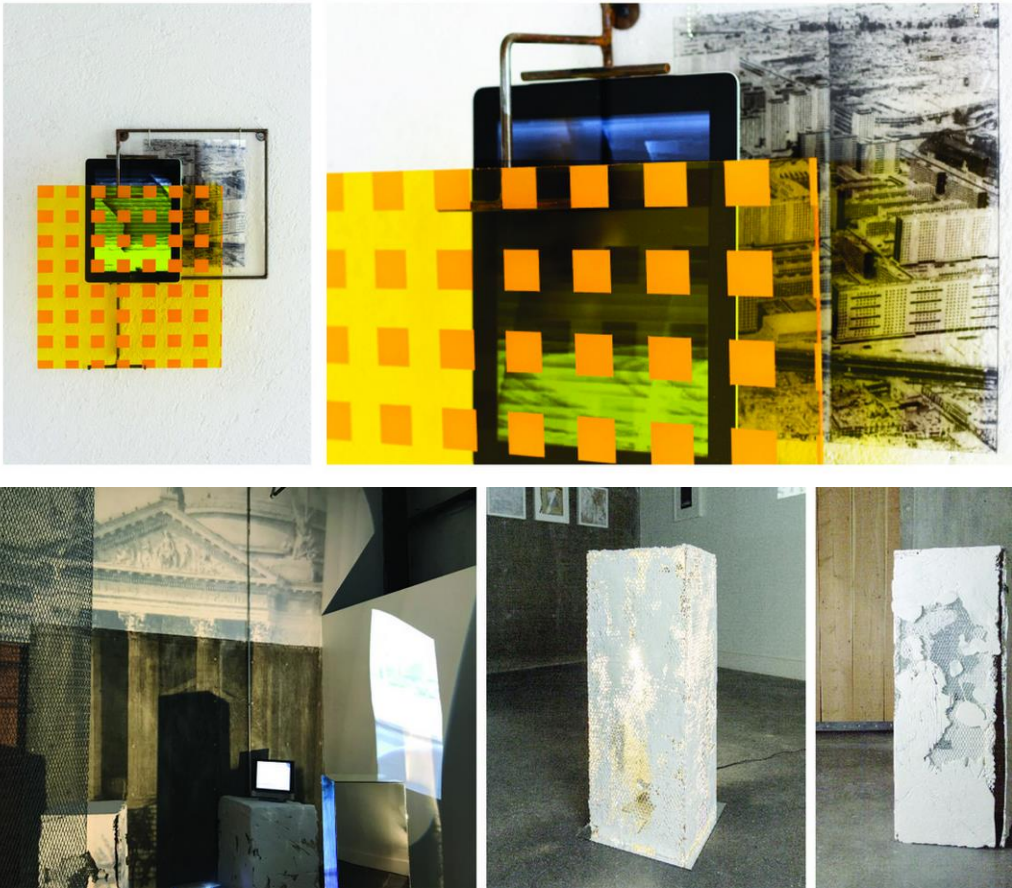


Charles Fairbanks is a filmmaker, writer, and Guggenheim fellow. He grew up in Lexington, Nebraska, and wrestled at Stanford, where he studied Art and STS (Science, Technology, and Society). He has a MFA in Art & Design from the University of Michigan, where he also studied Anthropology and History. Fairbanks's films have shown on POV and at Art of the Real, Images, Oberhausen, CPH:DOX, Slamdance, Visions du Réel, and hundreds of festivals across six continents. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, MacDowell, Yaddo and the Wexner Center's Film/Video Studio Program. Fairbanks has also worked as a programmer and translator in Belgium, taught videoarte and cel-phone videography in Mexico, and written for Senses of Cinema, DesistFilm and the Millenium Film Journal. He founded the Media Arts program at Antioch College, where he was awarded tenure in 2018. He now lives with his daughter, dog and parents in their central Nebraska hometown.

His first feature documentary *The Modern Jungle* (co-directed with Saul Kak) is a provocative portrait of globalization, focused on an Indigenous Zoque shaman who falls under the spell of a pyramid-scheme marketed nutritional supplement. *THE MODERN JUNGLE* won jury awards at Slamdance and Athens, and was awarded Best Documentary at *Présence Autochtone: the First Nations Festival of Montreal*. It was selected by multiple critics as one of the best Latino films of 2016.

His current project is about the fastest-growing high-school sport in the country: girls' wrestling. *She Wrestles* documents the lives and experience of girls who choose to wrestle – from farms, cities, Native American reservations and immigrant families across Nebraska – asking why our society still assumes that wrestling is "a boys' sport."

Allegra Hangen



Allegra Hangen is an artist whose multimedia practice mixes experimental film, photography, sculpture, textiles, sound, and installation. Her work often presents concepts and historical events in which mass media has played a crucial role, reconsidering, and ultimately undermining those images through appropriation and glitches.

Allegra holds an MFA in Visual Arts from UNAM, Mexico City and a BFA in Photography from the Art Institute of Boston, MA. Her work has been exhibited internationally in solo exhibitions, group exhibitions and film festivals including the 2022 Salina Biennial (Salina, KS), El Progreso Dura Para Siempre (Mexico City), EXPO 54 (Mexico City), A Pillar for Whom (Omaha), Eneagrama Film Festival (Córdoba, Argentina), ULTRAcinema Film Festival (Mexico), Stephen D. Paine Scholarship Exhibition (Boston, MA), among others. She has won various awards and grants, most notably the Populus Fund through the Union for Contemporary Arts/The Andy Warhol Foundation (2022-23), the Interchange Artist Grant through Mid-America Arts Alliance/The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (2021-22), she was nominated as Best New Media Artist and Best Group Show at the Omaha Arts and Entertainment Awards (2020), and was awarded first place for the Stephen D. Paine Scholarship by the Boston Art Dealer's Association (2014).

Lauren Simpson

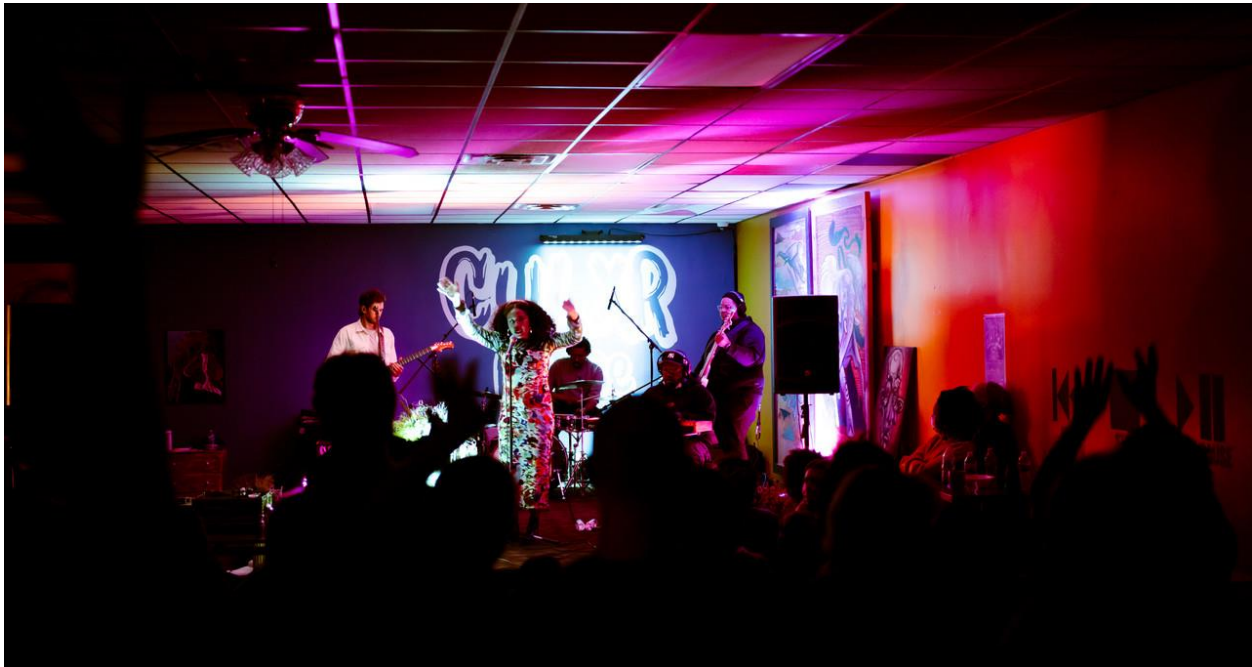


Lauren Simpson is an Omaha-based choreographer. In the summer of 2020, she created an experimental outdoor dance project called Moving Truck, a mobile show performed on the front lawns of over fifteen homes throughout Omaha. It was a featured performance in John F. Kennedy Center's virtual program, Arts Across America. Recent choreographic projects include Smithereens, a site-specific performance at the Joslyn Art Museum with music by Omaha-based musician Miwi LaLupa and Celestial Real Estate, a collaborative performance at Generator Space gallery featuring various local artists- Nick Miller (painter), Celeste Butler (textile designer), and Dereck Higgins (musician). In February 2023, Lauren will collaborate with Omaha visual artist Sarah Rowe on a choreographic response to her current exhibit "Post" at Kaneko.

A recent transplant from San Francisco, Lauren maintains close ties with the Bay Area. From 2014-2018 Lauren's collaborative work with Jenny Stulberg received nominations for two Izzie Awards and various artists residences including CounterPulse Theater, Shawl-Anderson Dance Center, Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Bare Bait Dance Company in Missoula, MT, and University of Utah. Lauren has danced for MacArthur Genius choreographer Liz Lerman and New York City/Oakland-based choreographer Risa Jaroslow. She taught dance at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, Harvard College and University of San Francisco.

Lauren Simpson has an M.F.A. from University of Colorado-Boulder, Ed.M. from Harvard University, and B.A. from Carleton College..

Mary Lawson, <http://www.maryelizabethlawson.org/>



Mary Elizabeth Jo Dixen Pelenaise Kapi’olani Lawson also known as Mesonjixx, is an artist, composer, writer, performer, organizer and collaborator. Belonging to two diasporas of two hemispheres, she happily calls the U.S. Great Plains home. While living in Chicago (2009-2014) she began her songwriting and performance practice. When she returned to Nebraska, she began writing more song, intentionally, and on her own and wanted to pursue these budding practices, in collaboration with other musicians. Mary is interested and committed to bringing her creative visions to life.

Soon after her performance debut in 2015, Mesonjixx has not only become a fixture of the Nebraska music scene, but has risen to the top of artists in the Midwest. As a solo, duo, trio, quartet or full band – Mesonjixx has drawn some of the most talented musicians of Nebraska. In 2017, Mesonjixx released an EP “In the Middle” recorded, mixed and produced at Omaha’s Make Believe Studios. After much consideration Mesonjixx decided to pull the EP from online streaming in 2019. She has since released a live album that was recorded in November 2021 at Omaha’s Culxr House. The live album features four of the five tunes that were previously recorded on the EP, “In the Middle”. To her, documenting those songs live with two of her original band mates is what was needed to reconcile and move beyond what once was

Mesonjixx organized a virtual performance called, ALL FALLS APART in November 2020, where she opened for outstanding composers, producers, songwriters, artists: KeiYaA and Salami Rose Joe Louis. The virtual event is now archived on her Youtube Channel. In 2021 Mesonjixx released a collection of demos she wrote while in studio in 2018. These demos were produced by hip hop artist and producer, Oddisee. This collection can be found on Soundcloud.

Gayle Rocz



Gayle Rocz (she/her/hers) is a dance artist, scholar, and educator currently based in Omaha, Nebraska. Gayle graduated in 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts in Dance and English from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Gayle is currently a company member of tbd. dance collective and recently performed in two of their evening length works, *III* (2022) and *Affect* (2021). She has worked with many nationally and internationally recognized choreographers both during and after college, including Jenna Riegel, Jennifer Nugent, Kayvon Pourazar, Lauren Simpson, and most recently Haley Koastas.

Gayle's most recent choreography was shown at Danceworks Milwaukee's Get It Out There Festival for emerging choreographers in July of 2022. She reset her self-choreographed solo, *Dolores*, which was originally performed in 2020 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. *Dolores* is a culmination of Gayle's research interests, which combine dance, girlhood studies, popular culture, and literature.

Other recent works of Gayle's include collaborations with other Nebraska artists, such as: by the way, a duet with Annie Schenzel for Omaha Under the Radar; *Dollhouse*, an interdisciplinary performance and art installation in collaboration with graphic designer Matthew Bailey and musician Natalie Hanson, which was funded by Amplify Arts' Generator Grant; and *The Moving Truck*, a COVID-era dance delivery service in collaboration with Lauren Simpson and Kat Fackler.

Gayle regularly contributes choreography for tbd. dance collective and has a forthcoming piece for Vox Dance Collective in Omaha, NE. She is an educator and choreographer at Dedication Dance Co. in Papillion, which is a local youth dance studio for emerging artists.

Lauren Bonk, <https://curtainandpen.com/>



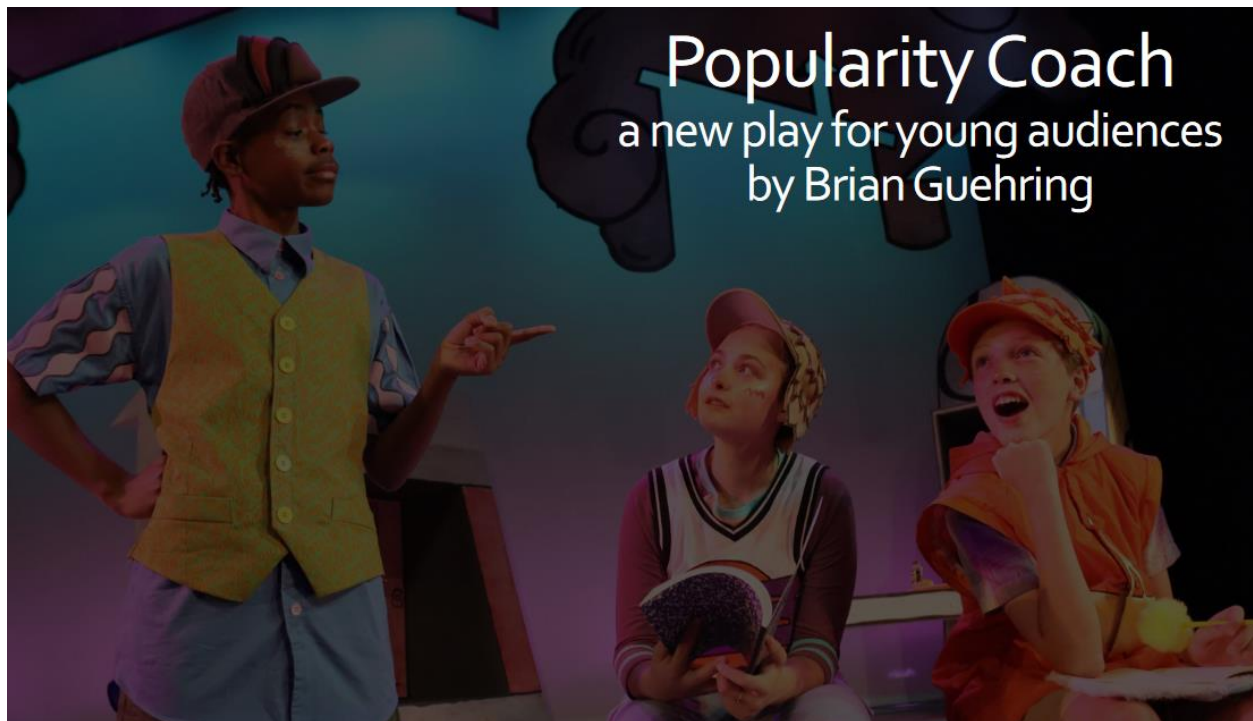
Lauren Bonk is a playwright, fiction writer, and freelance copywriter on a quest to carve creativity out of everyday life. She has lived most of her life in this state, and currently lives in Kearney, Nebraska with her husband and two children. She received her bachelor's degree in 7-12 English Education with an endorsement in Theatre from the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 2008.

Lauren has served on the board of directors at Kearney Community Theatre since 2016, and has both directed and acted in multiple plays at KCT. She was commissioned in 2017 by the Apollon in Omaha to write a Doctor Who-themed dinner theatre piece for their spring show slot, which was sold out and well received.

Lauren has been asked to read her prose, monologues, and poetry for the Prairie Arts Brothers Front Porch Poetry series, and has annually competed in the NYC Midnight short fiction competition since 2020. She is also an editor for Kearney Creates, a local arts organization dedicated to the chronicling of Kearney arts history.

My recent work has centered around my play I am a playwright working to have my play, SAY IT OUT LOUD. My mission is to create a piece of theatre that celebrates human connection while challenging patriarchal structures, fatphobia, and the idea of traditional romance as the ultimate ideal. This play is also a response to my experience as a girl and woman participating in Theatre in Nebraska. With the bulk of available plays written for cis-het male-heavy casts, rural and smaller theaters are forced to choose gender over talent in casting. SAY IT OUT LOUD has a mostly gender-neutral cast of characters, focusing on humanity rather than gender. SAY IT OUT LOUD will provide a diverse season option, and will mitigate the problem of limited actor pools.

Brian Guehring, <http://www.brianguehring.com/>



Brian Guehring is the award-winning Playwright in Residence of the Omaha Theater Company for Young People at The Rose. His play *Sherlock Holmes and the First Baker Street Irregular* won a Distinguished Play award from AATE (American Alliance for Theater and Education). His original play *Popularity Coach* was selected for development by New York University's New Plays for Young Audiences in 2019). His script, "The Bully Show," was selected for the 2002 New Visions/New Voices new play development workshop at the Kennedy Center. Several of his plays are published by Dramatic Publishing Company. Brian served as the education Director of the Omaha Theater Company and served on the national boards of Theater for Young Audiences/USA and Pride Youth Theater Alliance.

In 2016, Brian was honored by the Children's Theater Foundation with the Orlin Corey Medallion Award for significant achievements for the enrichment of children in the United States and Canada through nurturing artistic work in theatre and the arts. He was awarded a Lin Wright Special Recognition Award from the American Alliance for Theater and education in 2013. His teen theater troupe *Pride Players* won a Human and Civil Rights Award from the National Education Association in 2006.

Brian earned his MFA in Theater for Young Audiences from the University of Texas at Austin.

Nathan Brumbaugh



Photograph by Annie Schenzel

Nathan started his training in ballet here in the heartland with the Omaha Ballet back in 1986. After finishing his BFA from Columbia College, he began his professional career in Chicago, New York, Amsterdam, and San Francisco. Nathan fully actualized his potential in San Francisco. He joined and helped create diverse performance art and circus companies, honing his strengths as a performer, director, choreographer, and collaborator. With a background in martial arts and gymnastics, along with being a trained dancer, his creative voice found a whole new level of performance and storytelling. Nathan's works and collaborations have been seen all over the world. His works extend from intimate venues, to vertical stages in national parks, music videos, to live performances with artists like Peaches, Snoop Dog, Amanda Palmer, Rosen Covert, and Ryn Weaver-to name a few. Fascinated by the world of science, sex, politics, society, and the ability to have a creative voice in this life, Nathan takes every opportunity to look fear and uncertainty in the eye with a fresh and lively new twist.

My goal as a choreographer is to find the emotion and language in movement. Movement is an authentic, nonverbal way of communicating. When we dance, we all speak the same language. Through the art of movement, I am a storyteller. Stories are the way we connect as human beings. Through years of self-exploration and healing, I have gained the confidence to authentically tell my truth through my work. I strive to create a safe environment with an open invitation to others to simultaneously create and live their own, authentic truth. I dream to weave a beautiful web of life that connects with other beings of light.