

September 2026



Culinary expertise rooted in experimentation

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Musician by design, composer by accident



Angélica Negrón's cello concerto for Yo-Yo Ma premiered in May 2026. Photos by Catalina Kulczar

Composer and multi-instrumentalist Angélica Negrón's initial interest in music started in Carolina, a small town close to San Juan, Puerto Rico. At age 6, she was enrolled in piano lessons and added violin later. Negrón studied under the youth division at the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico in San Juan.

"I loved music but didn't see myself as a concert violinist," Negrón says. "I was really curious about other sounds, other instruments."

Negrón wondered if she just hadn't found the right instrument. She tried the accordion, cello and harp, hoping to develop an interest in one of them. Then she began recording music and sounds in her environment and experimenting with the recordings on her computer. This led to a life-changing discovery: She could compose music for all the instruments.

Searching for authenticity

In the early 2000s, Negrón worked on two full-time undergraduate degrees: film at the University of Puerto Rico and music at the Conservatory of Music.

"While studying film, I discovered film music, and through that, the music of living composers," she explains. "At the same time, I was very active in the DIY (music) scene in San Juan, more like experimental underground scene. That was a big part of my formation."

Negrón earned two undergraduate degrees in 2005 and a master's in composition from New York University in 2009. She's completed all requirements for a doctorate, except for her dissertation, from The Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York.

"Most of my career for the past 15 years has been embracing both sides, the classical and the more experimental side," Negrón says. "I flow in between those in a way that feels authentic to who I am."

Thoughtful composition

From 2013 to 2021, Negrón served as the teaching artist at The New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers Program that "celebrates children's creativity by providing them with the tools they need to transform their musical ideas into finished compositions." She fostered technical and creative independence and provided opportunities to compose music with students in grades three to five.

Negrón, a resident of Brooklyn, New York, creates original pieces for dozens of orchestras including the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Opera Philadelphia and the Seattle Symphony. In 2026, the Los Angeles Philharmonic commissioned her to write a cello concerto for Yo-Yo Ma; it premiered in May.

Balún, Negrón's indie electronic band, and [Roomful of Teeth](#), a vocal ensemble, will perform "[The Puerto Rico Experiment](#)" at the Perelman Performing Arts Center in New York City, Jan. 16-21, 2027. Negrón's composition will feature songs inspired by experiments such as medical treatments and military testing involving Puerto Ricans. She's invited four Puerto Rican poets to write poems inspired by these experiments, allowing for an exploration into Puerto Rico's colonization, history and representation.

"(I asked) them to imagine speculative fiction of possible experiments that might happen in the future, to balance it out and not have this be a trauma-filled song cycle," Negrón says. "They came up with really interesting, funny, and light and heavy but also hilarious ideas for other experiments."



A workplace vision constructed for women



LaToya Faustin is the CEO of She Built This City, a workforce development program in Charlotte, North Carolina. Photo courtesy of She Built This City

In 2019, Demi Knight Clark, a construction industry executive with 20 years of experience, launched [She Built This City](#) in Charlotte, North Carolina. She saw an opportunity to start a workforce development program for women interested in construction.

"Since the 1970s, construction has not been taught in school," says LaToya Faustin, CEO of She Built This City since 2024. "The pipeline into the industry is beginning to dry up. There was and is a major crisis in the industry."

She Built This City has evaluated its programs to make changes that fit the needs of the community. The nonprofit's programs and partnerships support its mission "to provide industry-disruptive programming that sparks interest and builds pathways to lucrative careers in the skilled trades for youth, women and marginalized communities."

Nuts and bolts

Building, Repair and Maintenance is a pre-apprenticeship program recognized by the Department of Labor. Participants apply to attend the nine-week program that's free to individuals seeking employment. Free child supervision for ages 3 to 12 is offered during the classes. Donations from companies such as the [Lowe's Foundation](#) and Turner Construction fund She Built This City.

The program builds exposure to carpentry, electric, painting and plumbing. Participants learn construction math and how to handle tools, visit job

sites and practice with industry professionals - skills to make them "day one" ready. They leave with certifications in OSHA-10, first aid and CPR.

She Built This City provides conflict, communication and team training through the DISC assessment, a framework that groups behavior into four categories: dominant, inspiring, supportive and cautious. Although a job isn't guaranteed, participants meet with employer-partners who are hiring at the Career Connecting Expo.

"We do human resources coaching," Faustin explains. "We have volunteers from the industry come and provide one-on-one coaching and interview prep. We do a panel on women in construction to discuss common barriers that they face and how they overcome those."

Hitting the nail on the head

She Built This City boasts about 500 alumni. Some move on to its two-year paid apprenticeship program. They provide critical home repairs for seniors and people with accessibility needs.

Charlotte resident Tamyka Malcolm had been looking to expand her business, Wall to Wall Painting, and pursue a general contractor's license.

"Those classes give you a taste of everything," she says. "You experience a little bit of the different trades."

Malcolm joined the program in fall 2025 and finished in December. She learned the most from panel discussion speakers in the industry and visits to commercial sites.

"She Built This City has empowered me to go out and get jobs," Malcom says. "We met women who held various positions, from recruiters, project managers, forewomen, to owners of construction companies. I received valuable information and insight from those women, and it has given me the courage to forge through and find my space in this industry."



LaToya Faustin. Photo by Flowersome Photography LLC

Ancestral. Intuitive. Primal.



Elisa Pritzker. Portraits by Enrique Rob Lunksi

As a child in Argentina, visual artist Elisa Pritzker's mother enrolled her in activities to expose her to various experiences. But older sister Norma noticed what would become Pritzker's true calling. "I think you're wrong sending Elisa to dance," she declared. "She's drawing all the time, in every corner of the house."

"At that moment, I said, 'I will be an artist all my life,'" she remembers. "It was an inner thought, and it was the first day that I went to the college for the class."

Since graduating with bachelor's and master's degrees from schools in Argentina, the two- and three-dimensional and installation artist has exhibited her original work in galleries such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Rockefeller Center, both in New York City, and Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Pritzker's work is part of permanent collections at the Brooklyn Art Library in Brooklyn, New York; The Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, New Paltz, New York; the Iceland Art Biennale in Garður; and in many other cities across the globe.

Although Pritzker left Argentina in 1989, she's continually influenced by the culture, especially of the Selk'nam people, a nomadic tribe who lived in the Patagonia region of Argentina and Chile.

"My art is eco-ancestral, intuitive and universally primal," says Pritzker, a resident of Highland, New York. "While my earliest inspiration came from a pivotal trip to Patagonia and the Selk'nam people, my work has since expanded. Today, my own imagined iconography reflects a broader, universal ancestry - one that speaks to the deep mystery of life and the enduring, magical power of nature."



"Going South" belongs to the Private Collection of Sandra and Pablo Sadler.

Pritzker's collection of works is based on her research of the ceremonies, dances and lifestyles of the Selk'nam people. Two of her sculptures, "Going South" and "Stone of Miracles," feature distinctive black, red and white icons, a personal iconography she creates entirely from her own imagination of ideas, symbols and themes. They represent the daily life of the Selk'nam tribe and other civilizations from long ago. She incorporates vintage fabrics and found items such as stone, wood and natural materials from the Hudson Valley, near her home.

"By researching, I found out there are many common things among many original people. My work is inspired by the universal ancestral times. This is evolving; there are many years of working with this topic."

Pritzker is curating an exhibition and showing works at Galeria Buenos Aires Sur in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Feb. 1-28, 2027. In September 2027, Wired Gallery, showcasing Mid-Hudson Valley artists in High Falls, New York, will feature Pritzker's work in a solo exhibition.



"Stone of Miracles"

Good books for young cooks



September – also known as [National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month](#) – is the perfect time for kids and the adults in their lives to lean into healthy foods. The following cookbooks could stoke readers' appetites for cooking, and consuming, wholesome meals and snacks.

Kids Can Cook!: 171 Fun Foods You Can Make!

Got a kid who wants to take over the kitchen? This book is packed with 171 recipes the whole family can tackle together. From snacks to full meals, there's something for every skill level. "Kids Can Cook!" is basically an excuse to make a delicious mess, and call it quality time.

The How-To Cookbook for Young Foodies: 75 Skills + Recipes That'll Make You a Great Cook for Life

This isn't just a cookbook. It's a cooking education. The team behind Delish put together 75 skills and recipes to turn little foodies into genuinely capable cooks. Think of "The How-To Cookbook for Young Foodies" as leveling up, one technique at a time, with seriously tasty results along the way.

Cooking Up Change: Grandma's Recipes From a Year in Black History

Part history lesson, part cookbook, all heart. Teen chef Michael Platt and his grandmother walk through 12 pivotal moments in Black history – and pair each one with a recipe to match. "Cooking Up Change" is the kind of book that feeds your mind and your stomach at the same time.

Cook with Clydeo: A Cookbook for Kids

Yes, Jennifer Aniston wrote a kids' [cookbook](#) that is actually quite good. Her cartoon rescue dog Clydeo leads little chefs through 35 beginner-friendly recipes with silly names and big personality. Whether you're making lasagna or s'mores dip, Clydeo makes every step feel like a fun adventure in the kitchen.

How to Cook for a Dragon: Olde Recipes for Young Chefs

What does a dragon eat? This cookbook sends young readers on a quest to find out, mixing real recipes with dragon lore along the way. "[How to Cook for a Dragon](#)" is perfect for kids who think cooking is boring. Because apparently everything is more exciting when a fire-breather is involved.

Sweet & Salty!: King Arthur Baking Company's Cookbook for Young Bakers

From the legendary King Arthur Baking Co. comes a [cookbook](#) that leans into the best flavor combo ever: sweet and salty. Young bakers get to learn from pros who literally run baking schools. Expect indulgent, impressive results and – just maybe – a kid who never wants to leave the kitchen again.

Culinary expertise rooted in experimentation



Regional Executive Chef Gabriel Jonas' blended heritage adds versatility to his cuisine. Photo courtesy of Thompson Hospitality

Chef Gabriel Jonas credits his high school home economics teacher, Monica Patterson, for nurturing his love of cooking. After he finished both cooking classes offered on the curriculum, Patterson asked what else she could do for him.

"She made me a teacher's assistant, and I helped teach other students how to cook and helped her develop recipes," Jonas says. "I was able to be her sous chef in high school."

In Chicago, Jonas grew up eating different types of ethnic foods; his mom is from Mexico, and his dad is from Hungary. After high school, Jonas attended Kendall College in Chicago and earned a bachelor's degree in food and beverage management in 2011. He gained experience in hotels and restaurants in France, Hungary and Spain and returned to his hometown as a line cook for The Peninsula Chicago.

Since 2019, Jonas has been developing recipes, leading teaching kitchens and coordinating chef's tables in his role as a regional executive chef for Thompson Hospitality. Although he's based in Chicago, he travels from California to New York to carry out a range of duties. One day he's teaching college students how to cook a meal inside their residence hall, and the next he's planning a seated dinner for VIPs.

A chef's journey

Instructing new cooks, such as college students, and introducing techniques at pop-up chef's tables allow Jonas to explore a region's foods and celebrate its communities. He recommends cooking for friends and family and being open to their feedback while you're learning.

"You need to definitely experiment," he says. "And you can't be scared to fail."

Jonas' recipe is his spin on *nokedli*, the small Hungarian egg dumplings his family used to make – often referred to as spaetzle.

"This dish was adapted from my grandmother on my father's side," Jonas says. "Her recipe included only flour, water, eggs, soda water and a pinch of salt. In my chef journey, I've learned to add a few extra ingredients that appeal to my palate."

Nokedli

6 servings

Ingredients

- 1 gallon water
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme
- 2 1/2 cups carbonated water
- 3 large eggs
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 1/2 cup canola oil

Directions

Bring 1 gallon of water to boil in a pot. In a mixing bowl, add all the dry ingredients. Slowly whisk in the wet ingredients, including the carbonated water, until a shaggy mass is formed. Place a large-holed sieve or a perforated pan over the boiling water and slowly scrape the dough through the holes using a bench scraper or spatula.

Boil the dumplings for 2 minutes and remove them from the water. Toss in fat or oil and serve immediately. If making these for the next day, shock the dumplings before tossing them in oil and refrigerating them.



'A better way to feed people'



Christie Melby-Gibbons operates Tricklebee Café in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Photo courtesy of Tricklebee Café

When it was time to name Christie Melby-Gibbons' pay-what-you-can community café in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she remembered a phrase her mom used when referring to a tough project: "tricklebee." Later in life, Melby-Gibbons realized her mom was saying, *The trick will be getting the right tools, the trick will be getting enough money.*

"I mused about it as an adult," says Melby-Gibbons, a reverend in the Moravian Church and executive director of Tricklebee Café. "We say, The tricklebee sustaining a restaurant when people don't have to pay to eat there."

Tricklebee Café is a member restaurant connected to One World Everybody Eats, a nonprofit founded in 2005. OWEE supports individually operated cafes across the country. Members follow seven principles including serving excellent food, allowing guests to determine what they can pay, welcoming everyone, and providing space for community and opportunities to volunteer.

True community café

For six years, Melby-Gibbons coordinated a weekly community dinner through her church in Southern California, using leftover ingredients from her food rescue efforts.

"I wondered if I was being nudged to do something more in the realm of food and making sure everyone has access to healthy meals," she explains. "I stumbled upon the One World Everybody Eats network."

In 2016, Melby-Gibbons opened Tricklebee in northeast Milwaukee's Sherman Park neighborhood, after considering several Midwestern cities. The area was neglected and access to grocery stores was limited.

"We really wanted to be the spot for people to get a warm meal," she says. "We went to an area where joblessness is rampant, and most people live at or below what Wisconsin calls the poverty line."

The menu, which changes daily, is 100% plant based. The café is open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and serves 75 to 100 people each day. Half of the guests live within a few miles of the café.

Volunteers sign up for shifts or may drop in to help with laundry, wrap silverware, pack snack bags for the neighborhood children and bus tables. Donations from the faith community, individuals, grants and fundraisers provide funding for operations and thriving wages for staff.

"We can be a place for everyone to come," she says. "It's a true community café. We are offering real food."



Jeff Williams is the executive director at Taste Project in Fort Worth, Texas. Photo by Taste Project

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'A better way to feed people'

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Taste Project is one of more than 60 cafes across the country connected to One World Everybody Eats. Photo by Rachel DeLira

A movement

In 2003, when Denise Cerreta opened One World Café, a pay-what-you-can community cafe in Salt Lake City, Utah, she didn't realize she was sparking a movement. A couple in Denver, Colorado, asked for help launching S.A.M.E. (So All May Eat) Café with the same business model as One World. Over the next decade after founding OWEE, Cerreta continued to mentor other restaurants following the pay-what-you-can model.

OWEE offers resources such as an annual conference for established pay-what-you-can cafés and for people thinking about starting one.

Julie Williams and husband Jeff Williams opened Taste Project in Fort Worth, Texas, in 2017. Julie joined the OWEE Board of Directors to assist in developing a long-term strategic plan. She became board president in 2019.

"We feel like we were called to this mission to feed, educate and serve our community in a different way," Williams says. "In that calling, we knew there was a better way to feed people."



Julie Williams is the cofounder and a board member for Taste Project in Fort Worth, Texas. Photo by Rachel DeLira

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