

[September 28, 2015](#) / [GO Brooklyn](#) / [Williamsburg](#) / [Music](#)

NATIONAL SAWDUST OPENS IN WILLIAMSBURG OCT. 1

Turn it up! Swanky Williamsburg music venue National Sawdust opens this week



Bureau V

Cutting edge: National Sawdust in Williamsburg will bring a mix of classical, avant garde, and pop music to the neighborhood.

BY MAX JAEGER

The Brooklyn Paper

This opening night will be all crescendo.

National Sawdust, the five-years-in-the-making Williamsburg music venue that aims to support emerging artists, will open Oct. 1 with a series of performances that get louder and louder, the venue's director said.

"The idea was to start the evening with a piece for piano — the space was designed for piano so we want to begin with piano — and then move to the most multi-channelled electronic and live-processed [music]," said executive director Paola Prestini.



On the spot: Paola Prestini, executive director of National

Sawdust, says that she plans to keep ticket prices down at the new music venue, which opens Oct. 1.

That progression will include a solo mandolin performance, Japanese trip-hop, an Inuit throat-singer, and a selection from an opera about a transgender woman's escape from Cuba, Prestini said.

The musical apex slated for Thursday has been building for a long time. Founder Kevin Dolan dreamed up the venue five years ago as a place for up-and-coming artists to build a following, but finding financing took time, and the tempo of construction varied, Prestini said.

The \$16 million venue — financed by Dolan and a group of philanthropic investors — is built in a former sawdust factory (yes, a sawdust factory — the building on Wythe Avenue and N. Sixth Street used to grind up scrap wood and sell the shavings). Despite the venue's hefty price tag, the organizers hope to keep tickets cheap — prices will vary from \$15 to \$40, with most ticket prices at \$25, Prestini said.

"If you want people to discover new music, you can't keep the price high — it's about keeping things accessible," she said. "It's maybe a little more than seeing a movie, but it's not going to be something that's prohibitive."

A rotating cast of 12 curators will populate the venue's stage with musicians who are on the cutting edge of cool, she said. Cycling in new curators will keep the selections from getting stale, one taste-maker said.

"You have this rotating staff, and it keeps things really fresh and interesting — there are a handful of people who I think are cool now, but ten years from now I may not know what's cool," said cellist and curator Jeffrey Ziegler, who will perform during the opening night.

Having a dozen people put together shows will also vary the music hosted at the spot, he said.

"Maybe I won't be the one curating the garage band from Bushwick, but other curators may," he said.

Opening night at National Sawdust [80 N. Sixth St. at Wythe Avenue in Williamsburg, (646) 779-8455, www.nationalsawdust.org]. Oct. 1 at 7:30 pm and 11 pm. \$60 and \$100.

Reach reporter Max Jaeger at mjaeger@cnglocal.com or by calling (718) 260-8303. Follow him on Twitter @JustTheMax.