WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS GALA

A Celebration of Women: Fearless, Creative, Resilient

MARCH 14, 2020
Tonight is a salute to Sheila C. Johnson and phenomenal women with impact, including the Washington Performing Arts Women’s Committee, celebrating their 50th Anniversary in the 2019/20 Season.

Congratulations, Sheila Johnson, for your extraordinary leadership in the arts!

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WELCOME
Michelle Miller, Emcee

PERFORMANCE
Children of the Gospel Choir
  Annisse Murillo, soloist
  Michele Fowlin, Artistic Director and Conductor

REMARKS
Jenny Bilfield, President & CEO
Gary D. Mather & Christina Co Mather, Reginald Van Lee, Gala Co-Chairs

TRIBUTE
Sheila C. Johnson, Honoree

SILENT AUCTION
Steve Little, Auctioneer

PERFORMANCE
J’Nai Bridges, Mezzo-soprano & Kevin Miller, Piano
  Courtesy of Washington National Opera

LIVE AUCTION
Steve Little, Auctioneer

PERFORMANCE
José André

FUND-A-NEED
Continuing a Legacy: The Heart of Washington Performing Arts

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AND ADDITIONAL THANKS TO ALL THE GUESTS AND CONTRIBUTORS WHO MADE THIS EVENING POSSIBLE!
as of date March 8, 2020
Sheila C. Johnson is founder and CEO of Salamander Hotels & Resorts, overseeing a portfolio of luxury properties including the Forbes Five Star-rated Salamander Resort & Spa. Ms. Johnson is a partner and Vice Chairman of Monumental Sports & Entertainment which owns the WNBA World Champion Washington Mystics (for which she serves as President and Managing Partner), NHL’s 2018 Stanley Cup Champion Washington Capitals, and the NBA’s Washington Wizards. In the media realm, Ms. Johnson co-founded Black Entertainment Television and has served as executive producer of documentary and feature films. A fervent supporter of the arts, she chaired the Metropolitan Opera’s 2019-20 season opening gala for *Porgy and Bess*, and is actively engaged in the development of Broadway-bound theatrical productions.

An accomplished violinist, Ms. Johnson received a degree in music from the University of Illinois, and she has dedicated herself to arts education as a teacher, change agent, and advocate. At the request of Queen Noor of Jordan, her Young Strings in Action orchestra performed at the Jerash Festival. She received the Al Nada award, Jordan’s highest educational honor, from King Hussein for the creation of the country’s first National Music Conservatory. Locally Ms. Johnson established the Sheila C. Johnson Performing Arts Center at the Hill School, which supports students and the Middleburg community. She serves on the Board of Governors of Parsons School of Design, and is founder and chair of the Middleburg Film Festival.
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SPECIAL GUESTS

MICHELLE MILLER, Emcee
The co-host of CBS This Morning: Saturday, Michelle Miller is an Emmy Award-winning correspondent for CBS News based in New York. Her work regularly appears on the CBS Evening News, CBS This Morning and CBS Sunday Morning. She is a graduate of Howard University.

J’NAI BRIDGES, Mezzo-soprano
J’Nai Bridges, known for her “plush-voiced mezzo-soprano” (The New York Times), has been heralded as “a rising star” (Los Angeles Times), gracing the world’s top stages. Her 2019/20 operatic engagements in the U.S. include her debut at The Metropolitan Opera, singing the role of Nefertiti in Philip Glass’ opera Akhnaten, and her house and role debut at Washington National Opera performing Dalila in Samson et Dalila.

JOSÉ ANDRÉ
Fourteen-year-old Bolivian jazz pianist José André taught himself how to play piano at a very young age. He has delighted audiences at prestigious festivals and concert halls around the world and has shared stage with renowned artists including Marcus Miller, Jason Moran, and Renée Fleming. José has been a multi-year participant in Washington Performing Arts’ DCPS Honor Ensemble program (a partnership with D.C. Public Schools) and has been featured by WPA’s Mars Arts DC initiative.

CHILDREN OF THE GOSPEL CHOIR
One of Washington Performing Arts’ resident ensembles, COTG is a destination for students seeking dynamic vocal training and high-profile performance experience. Led by Michele Fowlin, COTG has performed for presidents at The White House, foreign dignitaries at the National Memorial Service for Nelson Mandela, for the Library of Congress at the opening of Rosa Parks: In Her Own Words, and on NBC’s Today.

MICHELE FOWLIN, Artistic Director, Children of the Gospel Choir
In addition to her work with COTG, Michele Fowlin is the director of choral programs at Eleanor Roosevelt High School and leads master classes, vocal clinics, and guest directorships for gospel music workshops around the region. She has performed for dignitaries including Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, former President Obama, former Vice Presidents Biden and Gore, and others, and as part of former First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Let Girls Learn” campaign. She is a graduate of Howard University.
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It is with great pleasure that Salamander Resort & Spa extends our warmest congratulations to honoree, Sheila Johnson. A true visionary among all her philanthropic and career endeavors, whose passionate commitment for the arts is sincerely inspiring. We commend her infinite support, along with the strong ideals of Washington Performing Arts.
ABOUT WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS

One of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, Washington Performing Arts has engaged for more than half a century with artists, audiences, students, and civic life. The city is truly our stage: in venues ranging from concert halls and clubs to public parks, we present a tremendous range of artists and art forms, from the most distinguished symphony orchestras to both renowned and emerging artists in classical music, jazz, international genres, and more.

Washington Performing Arts deeply values its partnerships with local organizations and other arts institutions. Through events in myriad performance venues and neighborhoods, Washington Performing Arts engages international visiting artists in community programs and introduces local artists to wider audiences. We place a premium on establishing artists as a continuing presence in the lives of both young people and adults through residencies and education programs.

Our achievements have been recognized with a National Medal of Arts and with three Mayor’s Arts Awards from the D.C. Government. We have now embarked upon our second half-century, ever-inspired by the motto of our founder, Patrick Hayes: “Everybody in, nobody out.”