



WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS

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2020/21 Programming Announcement Webinar

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Recorded June 15, 2020 (1 hour, 4 minutes)

WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS ANNOUNCES ALL-ONLINE *HOME DELIVERY PLUS* SERIES FOR 2021

Series includes artistic innovators and leaders across multiple genres, including cellist Alisa Weilerstein; tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain; pianist Sir András Schiff; mezzo-soprano J’Nai Bridges; jazz and tap masters Sean Jones and Brinae Ali; singer Veronica Swift; and an all-star trio of pianist Evgeny Kissin, violinist Joshua Bell, and cellist Steven Isserlis—plus a super-charged tribute to ‘Queen of Soul’ Aretha Franklin, featuring pianist/vocalist Damien Sneed and singer Karen Clark Sheard; and more

Beginning in early 2021, *Home Delivery Plus* performances will be streamed from signature performance venues across the Washington, D.C. region. The multi-faceted virtual packages offer a headline performance and a range of companion components—including opportunities for audience interactivity—underscoring the organization’s commitment to foster community among its artists, partners, and supporters

Second half of 2020 resounds with online programming in *Fall for Local*, a focus on the region’s artistic excellence, featuring one-of-a-kind collaborations and more

Mars Arts D.C. community-based programming, long-running collaborations with D.C. Public Schools, and WPA Gospel Choirs also find new online expressions

(Washington, D.C.)—**Washington Performing Arts (WPA)** today announced ***Home Delivery Plus*, a new online series of performances and companion experiences beginning in early 2021**. An extension of the *Home Delivery* online programming launched on the WPA website earlier this month, *Home Delivery Plus* offers a variety of paid/ticketed digital packages that feature international, national, and local artists streamed in live or newly recorded performances; companion educational resources and activities; and “backstage” experiences offering a window into the artistic process. Prompted by this time of coronavirus, the series is nevertheless designed with the digital future of the performing arts in mind—as a complement to (not a replacement for) traditional live, in-person performance.

The series spotlights WPA’s historic commitment to collaborating with artists and engaging with partners and audiences throughout its community. The performance elements of each ticketed, digital package will be streamed with the production set-up and audio/video quality required for a high-level online concert experience. **At such point in the series as local health authorities and venue hosts judge it is safe for live audiences to gather for physically distanced performances, patrons may be welcomed to purchase separate tickets to attend in person**, even as the digital programming continues.

“In a time of enormous upheaval, it has been essential for us to affirm our mission as strongly as ever,” said Jenny Bilfield, President and CEO of Washington Performing Arts. “We have invited a truly dynamic cohort of creative artists and thinkers to partner with us and engage with our audience. We are all exploring new terrain, both through our performances and educational programs. Our goal has always been to provide a platform where artists can do their best, bravest work, and our plans for Home Delivery Plus amplify that commitment.”

HOME DELIVERY PLUS: THE FORMAT

Each *Home Delivery Plus* package will offer a range of experiences beyond a headlining artist’s performance, including some that most patrons seldom experience during a regular season. Each *Home Delivery Plus* package will include a selection of the following components:



- **Soundcheck:** Advance preparation for the performance, with a range of assets on the WPA website including video links, artist profiles and other background reading, deep dives into art and culture led by the featured artists themselves, and WPA-only interviews with thought-leaders from a variety of fields
- **The Green Room:** A “backstage” pre-performance conversation with the artist(s) and/or special guests
- **Opening Act:** A short set to open the program, performed by artists from our own community through Mars Arts D.C.—either from the same venue as the headline artists or, in keeping with physical distance requirements, from a separate location
- **Intermission:** An opportunity between sets for livestream viewers to interact with WPA staff, special guests, and/or each other
- **Headline Artist:** Renowned and emerging artists representing a wide range of genres, styles, and cultures, in made-for-streaming performances from superb D.C.-area venues
- **Linger Longer:** A WPA audience favorite: post-performance on-stage conversations with the artists, master classes, and more—always with an opportunity for audience Q&A.

These components of *Home Delivery Plus* are being planned with the post-coronavirus future in mind. It is Washington Performing Arts’ hope and intent that many of these enriched online offerings will become permanent complements to traditional in-person performances, providing not just added value for current patrons but invaluable learning resources for potential patrons.

Washington Performing Arts *Home Delivery Plus* series subscriptions and pay-per-view admissions will go on sale after Labor Day (exact date TBA). Pricing will be structured in keeping with the streaming marketplace. Archival viewing of streamed performances will be made available to subscribers and pay-per-view patrons on an event-by-event basis, informed by the wishes of the performing artists.

The dozen-plus *Home Delivery Plus* packages, concentrated in the winter and spring of 2021, mark a departure in format—but *not* in artistic quality or range—from the typical fall-to-spring “season” presented by Washington Performing Arts.

“Given the complexities of moving online, as well as the expectation of lower revenue from paid admissions due to health-mandated gathering restrictions that will limit live attendance, we are focused on retaining the quality of everything we offer,” Bilfield noted. “Likewise, while striving to retain the breadth of artists and genres that we and our audiences so value, we are focusing on building the depth of experience and range of touchpoints that we offer through each package of this slimmed-down series.”

On a financial note, Bilfield added, “We would like to thank in advance our loyal audiences for taking this new step with us—and, crucially, for continuing or even increasing their philanthropic support in this time of uncertainty, change, and constant resilience. This support is more critical than ever, given the radical shift in our ticketed revenue streams.”

HOME DELIVERY PLUS: THE ARTISTS

A number of the *Home Delivery Plus* artists and ensembles are in the process of developing programs unique to this series. Washington Performing Arts recognizes that, during this complex and rapidly changing time in our collective history, it is crucial that artists have the space and latitude to create a program that best reflects their voice and thinking. With the artists’ own concepts as anchors, WPA staff will further develop each package, in collaboration with the artists and in accordance with mandated health requirements.

Artists/programs confirmed to date include the following (alphabetized by ensemble name or surname of first artist in billing). **All dates, times, and streaming venues are to be announced.**

Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández

With dazzling costumes, sharp rhythms, and gorgeous storytelling, this iconic company of dancers, actors, and musicians returns to WPA after a long absence to bring the cultural heritage of Mexico to Washington, D.C.

Steven Banks

Presented in partnership with Young Concert Artists

Classical saxophonist Banks awed audiences at the Young Concert Artists (YCA) international auditions, and it was no surprise that he was named a 2019 laureate. He has it all, as a superlative performer, an evangelist for the saxophone in the world of classical concert music, a committed educator, and a compelling speaker. In a twist on the *Home Delivery Plus* format, his performance will be livestreamed from New York City and will include the premiere of a new work jointly commissioned by YCA and WPA (composer TBA).

J’Nai Bridges

Acclaimed as the “Beyoncé of Opera,” mezzo-soprano Bridges is among the most captivating and formidable singers of her generation. She has thrilled audiences from Europe to New York’s Metropolitan Opera to the Washington National Opera. She is also a veteran of Washington Performing Arts online programming, having performed in WPA’s “Virtual Gala” in March.

Zakir Hussain & Masters of Percussion

Hussain is one of the world’s premier classical tabla virtuosos and a longtime WPA favorite. He will be joined by an array of fellow percussion greats for an exhilarating performance of rhythmic traditions from India.

“Dizzy Spellz”: Sean Jones & Brinae Ali

Trumpeter Sean Jones and tap dancer/choreographer/vocalist/flutist Brinae Ali will present an innovative, Afro-futuristic fusion of jazz, tap, and bebop through the lens of bebop pioneer and trumpet icon Dizzy Gillespie’s music. The co-leaders and their ensemble explore the intersection of cultural and spiritual dilemmas within the African Diaspora, Gillespie’s coming of age through the racial and social dynamics in the Deep South, his creating and curating the bebop movement in New York, his spiritual journey to Africa, and, finally, his delving into Afro-Cuban music and the Baha’i Faith.

Evgeny Kissin, Joshua Bell, and Steven Isserlis

A co-production with Pro Musica Hebraica

This superstar classical trio of pianist Kissin, violinist Bell, and cellist Isserlis offers a program of works written in response to Nazi and Soviet anti-Semitism. The repertoire includes rarely performed works by Gnessin and Rosowsky, alongside beloved classics by Bloch and Shostakovich—including the latter’s searing and dramatic Piano Trio No. 2, which mourns the human toll of the Nazi invasion of Russia.

“A Brief and Modern History of the Etude”: Jenny Lin

Originally scheduled for the 2019/20 Hayes Piano Series, Lin will interpret études by Chopin, Philip Glass, Debussy, William Bolcom, and Gershwin. As part of the package, she will also share her pre-recorded conversations with luminary American composers Glass and Bolcom.

“The Art of the Fugue”: Schaghajegh Nosrati

Originally slated for the 2020/21 Hayes Piano Series before the coronavirus crisis, pianist Nosrati performs Bach’s *Art of the Fugue*, adding insights into how she has tackled this monumental work. She also speaks about her working relationship with her teacher and mentor, Andrés Schiff.

Sir Andrés Schiff

Piano legend Schiff’s rare U.S. recitals have been a fixture of Washington Performing Arts’ seasons since the late 1970s. His delicate yet intense performance style pulls the audience into each note of a program.

“The Queen of Soul: A Tribute to Aretha Franklin” with Damien Sneed and Karen Clark Sheard

With strong roots in D.C. and several Washington Performing Arts collaborations under his belt, Damien Sneed is joined by four-time Grammy winner and gospel star Karen Clark Sheard for an intimate evening in tribute to his former mentor and the immortal “Queen of Soul,” Aretha Franklin.

Sphinx Virtuosi

One of the nation’s most dynamic chamber orchestras, the Virtuosi comprise 18 top Black and Latinx classical soloists who are exemplars of The Sphinx Organization’s mission: to transform lives through the power of diversity in the arts. This program will feature a mix of contemporary and classic works, with additional touchpoints that foreground individual Sphinx artists.

The String Queens

Washington Performing Arts’ 2019/20 Ensemble-in-Residence, the D.C.-based String Queens transform the traditional classical violin–viola–cello trio into a spellbinding and musically omnivorous ensemble of the moment, ranging from the Baroque to today’s pop hits.

Veronica Swift

At just 26, vocalist Swift is charting a distinctive creative path as a performer, bandleader, and featured artist with the likes of Wynton Marsalis and Chris Botti. Washington Performing Arts showcased her in April as the debut performer in the (free-of-charge) *WPA Live* online series and as soloist in 2019’s Glenn Miller Tribute concert.

Alisa Weilerstein

In just over a decade, cellist Alisa Weilerstein has graced WPA’s stages in almost every configuration possible: recitals, concerti with multiple international orchestras, contemporary chamber music, and the complete Bach solo cello suites. Now, she returns with a solo, mixed-repertoire program featuring works by Bach, Golijov, Kodaly, and Britten.

Additional programs and further details will be announced over the summer. For the most up-to-date information, please visit [washingtonperformingarts.org/homedelivery](https://www.washingtonperformingarts.org/homedelivery).

2020 ONLINE PROGRAMMING: FALL FOR LOCAL

Although the paid/ticketed *Home Delivery Plus* series formally debuts in early 2021, there will be plenty of *free* Washington Performing Arts online programming to delight and inspire patrons throughout the remainder of 2020. The unifying theme is **Fall for Local**, a focus this autumn on the creativity and vibrancy of D.C.-based performers, teaching artists, partners, and businesses.

Cornerstone *Fall for Local* events include the following:

Christopher Tin's *To Shiver the Sky*

World Premiere; Saturday, August 29

(Note: This event was originally announced as a traditional, in-person event in the WPA 2019/20 season. It has been moved online in light of the coronavirus crisis.)

Two-time Grammy winner, composer, and conductor Christopher Tin, the U.S. Air Force Band, Modern Medieval, soprano Danielle de Niese, and tenor Pene Pati will present the digital world premiere of Tin's new oratorio, *To Shiver the Sky*, inspired by the history of flight and humankind's quest to conquer the heavens. Told through the words of 11 of our greatest astronomers, inventors, visionaries, and pilots, the work charts our relentless need to explore the universe, defy our earthly bonds, reach for the "face of God," and ultimately claim our place among the stars. The work was filmed in multiple locations both before and during lockdown, including Washington, D.C., London's Abbey Road Studios, and Tin's Los Angeles studio.

The City Is Our Stage: A Virtual Dance Spotlight

A project of Mars Arts D.C.

Date TBA

Dedicated to "bringing businesses and dancers together in the art of experience," this curated showcase of short works (3-5 minutes each) features a variety of solo/duo dancers and dance styles from around the city. Each segment will be filmed at a location that holds significant personal meaning for the dancer—whether a public outdoor location, a neighborhood, or an independently owned business. With this setting enhanced by members of the community, each dance will be captured by a videographer. Each dance will include documentary-style footage of both dancer and a local business owner, enhanced by the shared stories and experiences that connect them.

Living the Dream, Singing the Dream

In partnership with Choral Arts Society of Washington

Date TBA

The long-running annual choral tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. takes on a new format in this **abbreviated online edition, offered free to the public**. As always, the program is a collaboration between Washington Performing Arts' Men, Women, and Children of the Gospel Choir (directed by Michele Fowlin and Theodore Thorpe III) and the Choral Arts Society of Washington (directed by Scott Tucker). In this novel online edition, each singer's voice will be recorded individually, and then all voices will be edited together seamlessly. Musical selections will be interspersed with readings from past recipients of Choral Arts Society's Humanitarian Award.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING: ONLINE AND (AS POSSIBLE) IN PERSON

Washington Performing Arts provides performances, in-school artist visits, classroom instruction, and teacher resources to more than 100 D.C. Public Schools each year. The organization has been active in education during the pandemic, working with teaching artists and diplomatic partners to create and share digital content for teachers, students, and families to engage in distance learning. As students return to school this fall, whether in person, online, or in blended fashion, Washington Performing Arts will offer updated program formats and teaching artist engagement to align with D.C.'s plans and arts curriculum for the next school year. Music, dance, composition, improvisation, and global education will be taught through programs designed for students in grades K-12, including **Capital Arts Partnership** residencies, **DC Keys**, **DCPS Honor Ensembles**, and the **Embassy Adoption Program**, all offered in partnership with D.C. Public Schools.

Washington Performing Arts' gospel choir programs will also continue to create digital projects during the 2020/21 program year, including free online **Living the Dream, Singing the Dream** performance described above. Because full choir rehearsals are not possible due to physical distancing guidelines, the **Children of the Gospel Choir** will focus much of their year on the development of each member's vocal skills. Students in the choir, ages 9-18, will participate in individual vocal coachings, masterclasses, and musicianship courses, all through digital platforms. The students will meet virtually each week to build and strengthen their connectedness during the time of physical distancing, until such time as they are able to rehearse and perform in person. Performance and recording projects will be initiated and shared online throughout the year.

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."

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