



**WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS**
We make it happen

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**WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS ANNOUNCES
STYLISTICALLY EXPANSIVE ARTIST LINEUP AND
SCHEDULE FOR *DANCE IN DC***

Six original, newly commissioned short films spotlight the unifying power of the arts through unique pairings of local dance artists and businesses across DC

Series features a range of dance styles, including Go-go/Beat Ya Feet, Afrobeats, Kuchipudi, West African, Flamenco, and Modern

Films premiere on select dates from November 30-December 18, 2020

(Washington, DC)—**Washington Performing Arts** today announced the full schedule and artist lineup for *Mars Arts DC: Virtual - Dance in DC*. Adapting to the challenges brought on by COVID-19, Washington Performing Arts commissioned six short films that celebrate the dynamic creativity of the local dance scene alongside the entrepreneurial spirit of local businesses. Curated and co-directed by dancer/choreographer C. Lorenzo Evans III—who also serves as Washington Performing Arts’s Chief Operating Officer and Director of Finance—each *Dance in DC* film pairs a dance artist with a signature DC business. Award-winning Chilean-born local filmmaker and music-video director, Francisco Campos-Lopez, filmed and co-directed the pairings on location, in distinctive and unusual spaces around DC. Each production features a site-specific work, along with conversations between dancers and business owners who speak about their community in these critical times.

“My own life as a dancer, choreographer, and business person intersected in a really powerful way as I curated this series,” said Evans, “and I think that viewers will be as moved as I was by the inspiring and beautiful words of the artists and business representatives featured in each film. We are so proud that the series embodies Washington Performing Arts’s ethos of partnership, collaboration, and community!”

Part of the previously announced *Mars Arts DC: Virtual* initiative, the *Dance in DC* films will premiere in the [Home Delivery](#) section of Washington Performing Arts's website and on its social platforms (Facebook and YouTube), as well as on the artists' and businesses' online profiles.

To read the previous *Mars Arts DC: Virtual* announcement, [click here](#).

THE ARTISTS & PROGRAMS:

Featured Artist: Crazy Legz

Featured Business: Ben's Chili Bowl, Kamal Ali

Premieres on November 30, 2020, 7PM

Born and raised in Southeast Washington, DC, John Pearson III aka Crazy Legz "The King of Beat Ya Feet" has been pushing the Go-go rooted dance, Beat Ya Feet, for over a decade through DMV communities. He first became popular for the signature footwork and style named after him, which is credited with evolving the dance style at a time when the Beat Ya Feet dance was at its peak. He was one of the original members and leader of the popular DC dance group, the Beat Ya Feet Kings. His hard work paid off when it caught attention internationally through his travels to Warsaw, Poland and Ghana, West Africa. Now he not only pushes to influence the DC culture for generations to come, but to also spread it around the world by using the Beat Ya Feet dance to introduce Go-go music and culture to the masses in a way where the music genre is fully accepted and appreciated. He is the Owner of Pearson & Company LLC, a company that utilizes the Beat Ya Feet dance as a base to entertain and educate through events, workshops, competitions, and production.

Established in 1958 by Ben and Virginia Ali, **Ben's Chili Bowl** is a landmark restaurant located in the U Street Corridor of Washington, DC. It is known for its chili dogs, half-smokes, and milkshakes. Through the decades, the eatery has been there for its immediate community and the hard times they have faced, as well as the celebrities who stop by on their way through the nation's capital.

Featured Artist: Ashanté Green

Featured Business: Chaia Tacos, Bettina Stern

Premieres on December 4, 2020, 7PM

A native of Fort Washington, Maryland, **Ashanté Green** studied dance at the Dance Institute of Washington where she trained in many styles beginning at the age of seven. She simultaneously danced in the Dance Theatre of Harlem's Pre-Professional Residency program at the Kennedy Center for 11 years, working closely with the company's Artistic Director, Arthur Mitchell. Green also studied under Debbie Allen, performing in her play, *Pepito's Story*, in 2002. She received a BFA degree in Dance and a Master of Science in Performance Arts Leadership and Management from Shenandoah University. After graduating, she returned to The Dance Institute of Washington to work under Fabian Barnes. She currently oversees the school's pre-professional training program, bi-annual productions, coordinates performances, and trains students in ballet, modern, and jazz.

Founded by Bettina Stern and Suzanne Simon, **Chaia Tacos** is an unconventional shop serving seasonal, plant-based tacos, sides, and natural drinks in a stylish, casual setting. Chaia's "farm to taco" is a unique relationship between farmers and urban-style street food. The female led and

female run business wants its customers to put the best ingredients on their plate and in their bodies, while also cultivating sustainability to help the environment.

Featured Artist: Edwin Aparicio

Featured Business: Republic Restoratives, Sarah Mosbacher

Premieres on December 7, 2020, 7PM

Edwin Aparicio made his debut at the legendary Casa Patas in Madrid in 2001 and in 2005. He has since appeared as a soloist throughout the United States with the José Greco Spanish Dance Company and Reynaldo Rincón's Romería Flamenca, and shared the stage with internationally celebrated artists like Chuscales, Silverio Heredia, Roberto Castellón, Pedro Cortés, "La Truco," Elena Andújar, Carmela Greco, Pastora Galván, and José Luis Rodríguez. Based in Washington, DC, Aparicio has garnered a loyal following as an instructor, performer, director, and choreographer in the nation's capital. GALA Hispanic Theatre has become a base for presenting his eclectic company and for premiering his newest works. Since 2008, Aparicio has been a member of the faculty at The Washington School of Ballet and, in May 2013, he performed as a guest artist in TWB's production of *Hemingway: The Sun Also Rises* at the Kennedy Center. Aparicio also has performed with the Washington National Opera at the Kennedy Center in *El Gato Montés*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Carmen*. He has performed frequently at Washington Performing Arts events.

Republic Restoratives is a small batch, women-owned distillery and craft cocktail bar in Northeast DC. Founded by Pia Carusone and Rachel Gardner, the local distillery was born out of the end of a political career. The concept behind it combines politics and liquor in a queer and female run business that produces award-winning spirits, including whisky and vodka.

Featured Artist: Matthew Crittenden

Featured Business: ARTECHOUSE, Lena Galperina

Premieres on December 10, 2020, 7PM

Matthew Crittenden began dancing at the age of five. A native of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, Crittenden studied at The Washington Ballet Southeast Campus, where he primarily trained in ballet and African dance. He made his first stage appearances in *The Nutcracker* at the Warner Theatre in 2012 and 2013, and *Cinderella* at the Kennedy Center in 2013, under Artistic Director Septime Weber. He later was cast for Debbie Allen's DC-based stage play, *Brothers of the Knight*, at the Warner Theatre in 2014. As a part of the Star Makers Academy of Dance, Crittenden was a competitive dancer, winning numerous awards. He also performed in 2014 and 2015 with the majorette troupe, Ms. D and the Dancing Dolls, from the nationally televised show, *Bring It*. From 2016-2019, Crittenden appeared in Broadway Across America's *A Christmas Story* at Hippodrome Theater, *AIDA* at the Kennedy Center, Donnie Simpson's *40th Anniversary Celebration* at the Warner Theatre, and MC Hammer's *House Party Concert* at Entertainment and Sports Arena. He is currently a dance major and honor student at Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, DC.

At the intersection of art, science and technology, **ARTECHOUSE** brings digital and innovative art exhibitions to the public. ARTECHOUSE/Washington, DC has welcomed over one million visitors through its doors since June 2017 when it opened its doors. It aims to inspire, educate, and empower experimental art, connecting new age artists with audiences of all ages.

Featured Artist: Anuradha Nehru

Featured Business: The LINE DC, Crawford Sherman

Premieres on December 14, 2020, 7PM

Anuradha Nehru is the founder and artistic director of the Kalanidhi Dance School and Company. An award-winning Kuchipudi dancer, teacher, and choreographer, she has taught dance for over 29 years. She has been recognized by the Governor of Maryland for her dedicated service to the arts and supported by the Maryland State Arts Council. In 2016, Nehru received the Montgomery County Executive's Outstanding Artist Award for Excellence in the Arts and Humanities and, in 2020, she received the Pola Nirenska Award for Outstanding Achievements. As a choreographer, Nehru's quest is to constantly find new ways to create fresh and relevant works that connect with contemporary audiences. Her ability to transcend genres is best exemplified in her collaboration with Opera LaFayette in three operatic works—*Lalla Roukh*, *Les Fetes de L'Hymen et de L'Amour*, and *The Enchanted Forest*. Her other productions include *Rasa*, *Transcending Traditions*, the historical ballet *Bhagmati*, *Why We Dance*, *Poetry of Love*, and *Bhoomi*. Nehru is one of the founding members of the Indian Dance Educators' Association, a non-profit umbrella organization of Indian dance professionals established to serve classical dancers and dance lovers.

The LINE DC brings together community chefs, bartenders, artists, and more to its 110-year-old historic church building. Not only is it a luxury hotel, but The LINE DC also offers a full-service radio station and make use of its building as an art gallery for photographers, sculptors, painters, illustrators, musicians, and dancers alike.

Featured Artist: Akosua Amoakua

Featured Business: Nubian Hueman, Anika Hobbs

Premieres on December 18, 2020, 7PM

Born and raised in Washington, DC, **Akosua Amoakua** is influenced by Ghanaian culture, the lessons learned from an upbringing in traditional Senegalese ballet, and a hint of life in the Caribbean. Her undergraduate career at Howard University is a melting pot of exercise science and an introduction to the world of modern dance. This led her to found ASA! Enterprises LLC in 2011—an umbrella company covering one of the first international African dance fitness programs, a line of sport and dance apparel, a group fitness certification, ASA! Kelenya performing company, the SBJ West African Dance and Mentorship program, and the ASA! Body Personal Training Studio. She is known for propelling the culture of Afrobeat dance through its origins, and her expertise in both traditional and contemporary West African dance styles has birthed a technique that combines the old with the new. Amoakua also serves as co-founder and costume designer for FUZE Carnival, a troupe based in Antigua that seeks to highlight the connections between African and Caribbean culture.

Nubian Hueman features fashion apparel, accessories, art, and beauty brands that reflect the African Diaspora. Founder Anika Hobbs curated a space where artists from six different continents, representing more than 400 distinct brands, could create and sell on an international platform. With a mantra of "bridging cultures, building futures...creatively," it aspires to flourish into a multi-faceted brand that provides a retail conduit to a target market of African-oriented fashionistas and

art enthusiasts alike. Nubian Huelman not only believes in its mission to influence physical appearance, but also its ability to improve quality of lives.

Featured Filmmaker: Francisco Campos-Lopez

Francisco Campos-Lopez is a Chilean-born director, producer, and writer. He began his studies in Argentina and worked his way to become an international success. He moved to the United States in 2009 after earning a visa for extraordinary ability in arts. His work has taken him around the world, winning numerous film awards in the United States. He has taught master classes in China and Israel and is also deeply dedicated to conservation efforts in the Patagonia, the Amazon, and the Andes. *I Did Her Wrong* is Campos-Lopez's most recent feature film.

Dance in DC is part of Mars Arts DC, Washington Performing Arts's signature community engagement program highlighting artists from the DC region—a partnership of Mars, Incorporated and Washington Performing Arts, with support from Jacqueline Badger Mars.

ABOUT MARS ARTS DC

Mars Arts DC is Washington Performing Arts's signature community engagement project (formerly known as the Mars Urban Arts Initiative). Now in its sixth year, the program has grown steadily to new heights with artist residencies, new partnerships, events in venues across all eight wards of the District, and robust integration with the Washington Performing Arts main stage series, World in Our City global programming initiative, and signature education programs.

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: for decades, in venues ranging from concert halls and clubs to public parks, we have presented 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. We also have an ever-expanding artistic and educational presence on the internet, addressing the programming challenges of this time of pandemic while envisioning ongoing opportunities for online connection and community in a post-COVID world.

Washington Performing Arts deeply values its partnerships with local organizations and other arts institutions. Through events online and in myriad performance venues and neighborhoods, we engage international visiting artists in community programs and introduce 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 DC 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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