



**WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS**
We make it happen

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 6, 2021**

**WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTS
ROOTS & WINGS: GROUNDING THE ARTS IN POSSIBILITY,
A VIRTUAL FUNDRAISER SUPPORTING ITS ARTS EDUCATION
AND GOSPEL MUSIC PROGRAMS**

The free, one-hour event features an array of artists connected to Washington Performing Arts, and honors longtime Board member and community leader James J. Sandman

(Washington, D.C.) — Washington Performing Arts announced today the virtual fundraiser ***Roots & Wings: Grounding the Arts in Possibility***, which will be streamed on **Wednesday, May 19, 2021 from 6:30–7:30 p.m. ET** on its [Facebook page](#), [YouTube channel](#), and [website](#). The event is free and open to view; opportunities to support Washington Performing Arts, such as sponsorships and donations, are [available](#). All contributions will benefit Washington Performing Arts’s partnership with the D.C. Public Schools, Embassy Adoption Program, and gospel music programs.

The theme of this year’s fundraiser is inspired by the great German literary master Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who once said, “There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots, the other, wings.” *Roots & Wings* encapsulates Washington Performing Arts’s mission to create opportunities for Washingtonians of all ages and from all eight wards to take part in and benefit from outstanding arts-based community engagement and educational initiatives.

“Washington Performing Arts’s education and gospel music programs provide access and opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds: access to magnificent, enriching, and diverse performances delivered to them right where they live or go to school; and opportunities to learn, perform, and develop as artists themselves,” shared James J. Sandman, Washington Performing Arts Board member and *Roots & Wings* honoree. “What a gift to our community.”

Mr. Sandman, who has served on the Washington Performing Arts Board of Directors for nearly 20 years in various roles, is being honored for his expansive and meaningful service to the community.

“We are thrilled to celebrate Jim Sandman, a treasured member of the Washington Performing Arts Board of Directors,” stated Jenny Bilfield, President and CEO of Washington Performing Arts. “Remarkably, Jim has led and/or served on nearly every Board Committee during his tenure: his is a respected voice in every conversation. It has always been clear that his love for the arts is rooted in Washington Performing Arts’s impactful, inclusive, and accessible arts education programs. As such, Jim has been one of our most ardent champions of our founder’s ethos: ‘Everybody In, Nobody Out.’ We are so grateful for his friendship, partnership, and deeply principled leadership.”

Roots & Wings includes performances by classical pianist **Jenny Lin** (recently featured in *Family Art Moments* and *Home Delivery Plus*); Danish folk ensemble **Dreamers’ Circus** (past Embassy Adoption Program guest artists); jazz pianist and Hammond organ virtuoso **Matthew Whitaker** (past Washington Performing Arts concert headliner and Children of the Gospel Choir collaborator); **Washington Performing Arts’s Children of the Gospel Choir**, led by **Artistic Director Michele Fowlin** and featuring **Music Director Anthony “Tony” Walker**; and a special appearance by **Washington Performing Arts’s Teaching Artists**.

The *Roots & Wings* program also includes a silent auction with chances to bid on online classes with experts, vacation getaways, luxurious pampering packages, delectable wines, and more. Sponsored by the Washington Performing Arts Board of Directors, Junior Board, and Women’s Committee, the silent auction bidding opens approximately one week before the event and closes during the program, which lasts one hour. Participation in the silent auction and donations made during *Roots & Wings* will support Washington Performing Arts’s education and gospel music programs. These initiatives have a long history of benefiting the Greater D.C. area through more than 800 learning and community engagement events that serve over 50,000 participants of all ages.

For more information about *Roots & Wings*, please visit washingtonperformingarts.org.

ROOTS & WINGS LEADERSHIP

Event Co-Chairs

Trista L. P. Colbert and Kathryn Jones

Auction Co-Chairs

Grace Lin and Elaine Rose

Committee

Debbie Driesman, Tom Gallagher, Cassidy Grunninger, Arleen Kessler, André O. Lewis, Glendonia McKinney, Alyssa O’Connor, W. Stephen Piper, Naboth van den Broek, Reginald Van Lee, Gladys Watkins, Carolyn Ross Wilson, Gary Yacoubian

ABOUT THE HONOREE: JAMES J. SANDMAN

James J. Sandman has served on the Washington Performing Arts Board of Directors for nearly 20 years in a variety of roles: Chair of Education Programs, Chair of the Audit Committee, Vice Chair of the Board, and always as a principled advocate, generous partner, and loyal friend. Indeed, arts

education and equitable access to our programs have been paramount during Jim’s service—he brings our founding motto “Everybody in, nobody out” to life through a shining example.

Currently Distinguished Lecturer and Senior Consultant to the Future of the Profession Initiative at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, Jim has had a long and varied career in private practice with a leading law firm, in government service, and as a public interest lawyer. Jim has offered Washington Performing Arts a unique perspective, not only as an arts lover, but also as a past General Counsel of the District of Columbia Public Schools and a current member of the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board. His championing of justice and equity has had national impact and reach—Jim is President Emeritus of the Legal Services Corporation, the largest funder of civil legal aid in the United States. He practiced law for 30 years with the international, Washington-based law firm of Arnold & Porter and served as the firm’s Managing Partner for a decade, and he is a past President of the 110,000-member District of Columbia Bar.

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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