



Norwegian Embassy



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WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS AND THE ROYAL NORWEGIAN EMBASSY PRESENT THE ANNUAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATION AND NORWEGIAN CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING AT UNION STATION

**Hosted by Allison Seymour and featuring performances by C Street Collective,
Rayshun Lamarr, Matthew Crittenden, and Charlotte Dos Santos**

(Washington, D.C.) — **Washington Performing Arts** and the **Royal Norwegian Embassy**, in partnership with the **Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce**, join forces to welcome back the annual **Norwegian Christmas Tree Lighting** on **Wednesday, December 8 at 5 p.m.** The cherished holiday tradition—which gathers thousands of D.C. residents and tourists each year—returns to the Main Hall of **Union Station**. The celebration is free to the general public and includes live performances by artists from D.C. and beyond. The event is primarily standing-room-only, although a limited number of seats will be available on a first come, first served basis.

“The Norwegian Embassy is very happy to be able to bring this great tradition back this year,” said Norway’s Ambassador to the United States Anniken Krutnes. Washington Performing Arts President and CEO Jenny Bilfield echoed the sentiment, noting, “During this holiday season, Washington Performing Arts feels the spirit of generosity and connection so deeply within our community. We are grateful for our long relationship with the Royal Norwegian Embassy, the Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce, and Union Station. We’re also thrilled to have such special guests—diplomatic, artistic, and arboreal—center stage as we light up Union Station!”

Following a one-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Norwegian Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony will again ring in the season with warm cheer and a celebration of friendship and community. WUSA9’s **Allison Seymour** hosts the proceedings, which include the lighting of a 70-foot tree decorated with some 20,000 lights and ornaments. This year, **Secretary of the District of Columbia Kimberly A. Bassett** will attend the ceremony. The musical program—which is curated by Washington Performing Arts under the umbrella of its ongoing *Mars Arts D.C.* initiative, focusing on D.C.-based artists and audiences—includes performances by the D.C.-based classical ensemble **C**

Street Collective, D.C.-based cross-genre vocalist **Rayshun Lamarr** (who recently appeared on NBC's *The Voice*), D.C.-based teenage dance virtuoso **Matthew Crittenden**, and New York-based Norwegian-Brazilian jazz singer **Charlotte Dos Santos** (who appears courtesy of the Embassy).

Since 1997, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, in partnership with the Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce, has gifted a Christmas tree to the District of Columbia in recognition of the strong friendship between Norway and the United States, and in gratitude for America's support during and after World War II. The tree lights up Union Station throughout the month of December, greeting visitors to D.C. and honoring a transnational friendship. Washington Performing Arts became a producing partner of the event in 2018, showcasing D.C. artists as part of the program.

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, gospel music, jazz, and other rich traditions from around the world. We also have an ever-expanding artistic and educational presence on the internet, envisioning ongoing opportunities for online connection and community.

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."

ABOUT MARS ARTS D.C.

Mars Arts D.C. is Washington Performing Arts's signature community engagement project. The product of a partnership between Washington Performing Arts, Jacqueline Badger Mars, and Mars, Incorporated, *Mars Arts D.C.* carries out its mission of presenting and elevating the dynamic vibrancy found in the local arts community and business economy through ever-growing artist engagement and long-term communal partnerships.

ABOUT THE ROYAL NORWEGIAN EMBASSY

Strong historical ties link Norway and the United States. Between 1825 and 1940, more than one-third of Norway's population emigrated to America. Allies ever since, the two nations fought together in World War II and were co-founders of both the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Today around 5 million in the U.S. identify as Norwegian-Americans. The

Embassy in Washington is Norway's largest, working to further strengthen the relations between Norway and the United States in areas such as transatlantic and global security, trade, energy, and others. The Norwegian Ambassador to the United States is Anniken R. Krutnes.

ABOUT THE NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce, Mid-Atlantic Chapter (NACC-MA), is a non-profit membership organization formed to promote trade, create business opportunities, professional relationships, and goodwill between the U.S. Mid-Atlantic Region and Norway. As a business-oriented networking organization, NACC MA connects business, government, and industry representatives in the United States and Norway, helping them to identify strategic partners and resources, reach potential customers, and develop business opportunities. Through value-added membership programs, including high-profile networking events and active business-sector committees, the Chamber creates a dynamic forum for productive networking and focused collaboration. In addition to creating a collaborative business environment, NACC MA programs link members to an extended network of regional, national, and international organizations. With a diverse membership portfolio of over 150 corporate and individual members, NACC MA offers an exceptional membership opportunity in a globally connected business network.

ABOUT UNION STATION

Union Station D.C. is a superbly restored, historic, mixed-use, intermodal transportation, and shopping center located just blocks from the U.S. Capitol building. Union Station D.C. is one of the most iconic destinations in Washington, D.C. Union Station D.C. is equipped with three levels of shopping and dining, a four-level parking garage, one of the most breathtaking historical spaces in the country.

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