FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 13, 2022

WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS WELCOMES
TWO NEW MEMBERS TO ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joseph May and Kerrien Suarez previously served in the Junior Board

(Washington, D.C.)—Washington Performing Arts has announced the appointment of two new members to its Board of Directors: Joseph May and Kerrien Suarez. Having previously served on the Junior Board, Dr. May and Ms. Suarez have been engaged advocates for Washington Performing Arts’s mission, amplifying their support for its wide-ranging programs.

“We’re thrilled to welcome Joseph May and Kerrien Suarez to our Board of Directors,” stated Washington Performing Arts President and CEO Jenny Bilfield. “Both are exceptional leaders who have been active, dynamic members of our Junior Board, while also serving on Board committees and participating in many of our crucial, mission-facing conversations and initiatives.”

Since its inception in 2017, the Washington Performing Arts Junior Board has brought together a dedicated and diverse set of young professionals who are enthusiastic about the arts and committed to advancing philanthropy and advocacy in the D.C. area. Their involvement in the Junior Board encompasses professional development in governance, including mentorship from members of the Washington Performing Arts Board of Directors, creating a natural progression into that leadership body.

Bilfield further explained, “When we created the Junior Board, our goal was to engage young professionals who are passionate about the arts and eager to support our programs. Much as Washington Performing Arts cultivates early-career artistic talent on our stages, we wanted to provide a parallel pathway to Board participation as well. When our field asks, ‘where will the next Board members come from?’ we’re happy to point to these efforts in response.”
A new pathway to Board membership, internally known as the Junior Board “Step-Up Program,” is part of a comprehensive effort to reinforce Washington Performing Arts’s Board recruitment efforts through alignment with two of the organization’s guiding principles: pursuing inclusion and building a lasting legacy. Recognizing the strength that comes from diversity, Washington Performing Arts continues to seek balanced representation across gender, age, race, ethnicity, and lived experience in both of its Boards. These values have been fundamental to Washington Performing Arts since its founding days (by Patrick Hayes and Todd Duncan), and this work is intentional and ongoing. Further detail about this history can be found on this timeline document.

Dr. May and Ms. Suarez officially joined 33 other members of the Board of Directors in December 2021. A full listing can be found at washingtonperformingarts.org/aboutus/board-of-directors/. Washington Performing Arts Board members serve three-year terms with no term limits.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS, PHOTOS, AND QUOTES FROM THE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

JOSEPH MAY

Pediatric Cardiologist and Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army

Joseph May, MD, MPH, is pediatric cardiologist and a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army. He currently serves at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center as the Chief of Pediatrics, running the largest pediatrics department the Military Health System with more than 200 staff members. A pianist by training, Dr. May completed a minor in music through Peabody Conservatory of Music while a pre-medical student at the Johns Hopkins University. He attended medical school at Pennsylvania State College of Medicine, completed his pediatrics residency at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and completed cardiology fellowship at Stanford University Medical Center. Dr. May has served in prior military assignments in Germany, Iraq, and Afghanistan and has been awarded numerous awards and recognitions, including the Bronze Star Medal and induction into the Order of Military Medical Merit. He is married to Mr. Brian Pesin, a Senior Manager at the technology company Arkose Labs, which focuses on cyber security and fraud protection. They reside in Dupont Circle and have been actively involved with Washington Performing Arts for the past decade, with Dr. May previously serving on the Executive Committee of the Washington Performing Arts Junior Board. Dr. May and Mr. Pesin also serve as Co-Chairs for the 2022 Washington Performing Arts Gala.

“I’m so honored to be a part of such a great organization, which not only brings world-class artists to the stages in our region, but also places such a high priority on arts education and artist development in our community. As a pediatrician, I am particularly proud of the meaningful relationship that Washington Performing Arts has with the DC Public Schools System through programs like DC Keys, which helps get keyboards into DC Public Elementary Schools and champion early music education.”
KERRIEN SUAREZ  
**President of Equity in the Center**

Kerrien Suarez is President of Equity in the Center (EiC), a field-wide initiative to influence social sector leaders to shift mindsets, practices, and systems to achieve race equity. In 2018, EiC published “Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture,” which details management and operational levers organizations utilize to center race equity and transform culture. A management consultant with over 20 years of experience, Ms. Suarez led engagements to refine programs and scale impact for national nonprofits and philanthropies, as well as coached executives and social entrepreneurs whose work focused on eliminating race-based disparities. A devoted patron of the performing arts, she has supported ballet companies, classical music organizations (including orchestras), and arts presenters in applying an equity lens to their work. She serves on the Boards of Directors of Washington Performing Arts, NEO Philanthropy, and The Equity Lab. Ms. Suarez is a graduate of Harvard College and London School of Economics.

“As a devoted member of its vibrant community, becoming a member of the Washington Performing Arts Board of Directors is the fulfillment of a dream. I’m thrilled to contribute to the organization’s phenomenal work, and to support its exceptional leadership team, in this new role.”

**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.”

For more information, please visit [washingtonperformingarts.org](http://washingtonperformingarts.org).

###