



WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS

We make it happen

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 31, 2025

CONTACT:

Amanda Sweet

(347) 564-3371

amanda@bucklesweet.com

WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS WELCOMES TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS TO ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND 12 NEW JUNIOR BOARD MEMBERS

(Washington, D.C.)—Washington Performing Arts announced the appointment of two new members to its Board of Directors: **Mary Mahle** and **Denise Rollins**, and 12 new Junior Board members: **Ansley Brown, Mickleala Carter, Dionna “Dion” Cheatham, Ida Claude, Tia Di Salvo, Alisha Henderson, Amanda Keiser, Giovani Malcom, Gabby Malek, Christine P.Y. Lin, Yorgos Raskovic, and Jessica Yergin.**

“Washington Performing Arts is thrilled to welcome such accomplished, dedicated arts lovers to our Board of Directors and Junior Board. Hailing from a variety of sectors – healthcare, foreign service, communications and media, defense, finance, and real estate – their expansive experience will make us even stronger and more connected throughout our wide community. We look forward to their partnership and advocacy.”

- President & CEO Jenny Bilfield

Washington Performing Arts has a dynamic and deeply engaged Board of Directors, Junior Board, and Women’s Committee, comprised of members from varied backgrounds, generations, professional expertise, and life experience.

Washington Performing Arts seeks 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.

The 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.

A full listing can be found at [washingtonperformingarts.org/our-people#board](https://www.washingtonperformingarts.org/our-people#board). Washington Performing Arts Board members serve three-year terms with no term limits.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS BIOGRAPHIES

Mary Mahle brings a long history of public service and community involvement to the Board of Directors. A Detroit native, she earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan, followed by language study at the Italian University for Foreigners. After relocating to Washington, D.C., she worked at the U.S. Treasury Department and as a computer programmer for the DEA and IRS. Mahle's passion for the arts and civic life is reflected in decades of volunteer service, including leadership roles with the Washington Chamber Symphony and the Georgetown Chorale. She has sung with Temple Micah Choir for over 50 years and supported musical organizations across the city. A longtime volunteer with Washington Performing Arts, she served on the Women's Committee and chaired its Committee for Seniors, organizing performances at senior residences.

Denise Rollins is a retired Senior U.S. Foreign Service Officer (Minister Counselor) with over 40 years of experience in international development. She held senior leadership roles at USAID, including Acting Assistant Administrator for the Asia Bureau and Mission Director in Bangladesh. Her overseas postings also included South Africa, Jamaica, Ghana, Uganda, and Nigeria. Rollins has led large teams and complex programs in partnership with governments, donors, and civil society. She holds degrees from Howard University and Johns Hopkins SAIS and currently serves on the boards of the USAID Alumni Association, and Washington Performing Arts. Previously, she contributed to Washington Performing Arts as a dedicated member of the Women's Committee.

JUNIOR BOARD MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

Ansley (Brown) Davis is a communications executive with more than a decade of experience leading strategic communications for global brands across philanthropy, fashion and tech. She currently serves as Communications Director at *Stand Together*, a philanthropic organization, where she oversees communications and media relations for Stand Together Ventures Lab and Stand Together Music, Sports, and Entertainment. Prior to Stand Together, Ansley held leadership roles at *Endeavor/IMG* and *Savage X Fenty: By Rihanna*. A graduate of Clark Atlanta University (B.A., Mass Media Arts – Journalism), Ansley completed post-graduate studies in Public Relations at the London College of Communication. Deeply passionate about the arts, she is an advocate for access to creative expression and has a personal love for ballet, art history, and time spent in nature. Ansley lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband, Terence.

Mickeala Carter is a Senior Director of Strategic Communications at FTI Consulting, where she focuses on messaging and stakeholder engagement initiatives across policy and regulatory landscapes. Prior to joining FTI, she was appointed to serve in the Biden-Harris Administration as Deputy Director of Communications at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Before her tenure at USDA, Mickeala spent nearly eight years on Capitol Hill, holding key roles with the House Agriculture Committee and former Congressman Filemon Vela of Texas. In 2020, Mickeala cofounded Black Professionals in Food and Agriculture, an organization committed to fostering equity and representation throughout the sector. She is also deeply engaged in the arts community, serving as an active member of the Voices of Triumph choir at Alfred Street Baptist Church, and singing with the Men and Women of the Gospel choir through the Washington Performing Arts. A proud native of DeSoto, Texas, Mickeala is a graduate of Texas A&M University.

Dionna “Dion” Cheatham is Partnerships Director in the healthcare technology sector, where she focuses on building collaborative initiatives that promote health equity and social inclusion. As an angel investor in healthcare and climate sectors, she seeks to promote equity by funding underrepresented founders. She developed a lifelong passion for the arts growing up in Detroit’s rich cultural landscape and within a family of artists involved in film, painting, and music..With a background that values diversity and creativity, she is passionate about nourishing the next generation of artists and arts lovers. She also believes in the healing power of the arts and has published research exploring non-Western healing modalities for individuals who have experienced gender-based violence (GBV). Prior to her current roles, she spent 10 years in the public sector at the United States Agency for International Development in Bureau of Global Health; and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families. When she’s not at work, Dionna volunteers as a DC Master Gardener, empowering and teaching residents to nurture their communities and harness the power of creating beautiful, sustainable spaces.

Ida Claude works as an Associate at BCG. Originally from Chicago, she grew up playing the violin and developed a passion for classical and chamber music. She graduated from Dartmouth College in 2023, where she served as a student manager and violinist in the Dartmouth Symphony Orchestra and spent her summers working at the Marlboro Music Festival.

Tia Di Salvo is a Senior Vice President in Teneo’s Strategy and Communications business and serves as Chief of Staff for the firm’s Washington, D.C., office. A trusted reputation strategist, she advises leading global organizations on high stakes matters at the intersection of business, politics, and public opinion. Her work helps clients navigate scrutiny, shape public discourse, and safeguard long-term reputation and license to operate. As Chief of Staff, Tia drives strategic growth, operations, and market positioning in the Beltway, working closely with senior leadership to expand Teneo’s presence and capabilities in the region. Prior to Teneo, she was with Weber Shandwick in New York, advising on M&A, litigation, and public affairs campaigns. Tia holds a B.A. in public relations and political science from Hofstra University and is a member

of New York Women in Communications' Scholarship Committee, supporting the next generation of women leaders in media and communications.

Alisha Henderson is a Command and Control Policy and Procedures Manager with the United States Space Force, where she helps shape national defense policy in emerging space domains. A longtime advocate for the arts, she has served for over a decade as a board member with Hartford's Proud Drum, Drill, and Dance Corps, uplifting youth through creativity and discipline. Alisha holds a BBA in Strategic Design and Management from Parsons School of Design at The New School, where she combined business strategy with her love of the fashion industry. A passionate supporter of the performing arts, Alisha is thrilled to join the Washington Performing Arts Junior Board. She admires the organization's commitment to access and inclusion across all communities and is inspired by the leadership's bold vision. Whether she's attending a Broadway show or curating her next fashion-forward moment, Alisha is driven by beauty, music, and meaningful expression.

Amanda Keiser serves as an Investment Associate at Cleghorn Capital, a privately held real estate investment firm specializing in multifamily and industrial assets in the Mid-Atlantic region. Raised in the D.C. area, she is passionate about the arts and found her artistic niche in Irish Dance, beginning her training at the age of five. Keiser pursued this career by moving to Ireland to study Irish Music and Dance at the University of Limerick, where she performed across Ireland and the UK with various performing troupes. She remains actively involved in the arts, regularly appearing as a professional dancer with the Kate Spanos Irish Dance Company in the D.C. area, and competing in solo competitions with the District Irish Dance Academy.

Giovani Malcolm is a 25-year-old media specialist, speaker, and strategist, currently serving as Assistant Director of Social Media for Student Life at Indiana University. He began his career as a Senior Partner at JUV Consulting, a Gen Z-led firm connecting major brands—such as Starry (PepsiCo), Warby Parker, Meta, and Spotify—with Gen Z audiences. He has also worked on prominent political campaigns including Harris-Walz 2024, Biden for President 2020, and Kamala for the People 2020. At Civic Nation, he led digital strategy for national nonprofit initiatives like It's On Us, Change Collective, and We The Action. Giovanni is completing his Doctorate in Voice at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. He also holds a Master of Music from IU and graduated with distinction from the University of Delaware with degrees in Political Science, Voice Performance, and Music Management. His thesis explores the role of Critical Race Theory in K-12 education.

Gabriella Malek is a strategic leader in healthcare transformation, currently serving as an Associate Director in Guidehouse's Health segment. She leads enterprise-level initiatives focused on policy-driven modernization and operational improvement for federal and commercial clients. Gabriella also serves as an adjunct professor at NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, mentoring future healthcare leaders. Her global perspective was shaped by her work at the World Bank's Health, Nutrition, and Population Global Practice, where she advanced innovative financing models to support the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Gabriella holds a BS and MPH in Global Health Policy from The George Washington

University. A lifelong supporter of the arts, Gabriella grew up performing on Broadway and television, and was a founding member of Broadway Kids Care, supporting NYC-based community initiatives. She is honored to join the Board of Washington Performing Arts and looks forward to advancing its mission of cultural connection and artistic excellence.

Christine P.Y. Lin brings a unique blend of science, diplomacy, and a lifelong passion for music, art, languages, and cross-cultural connection to her role as a Junior Board Member of Washington Performing Arts. She began her career as a clinical pharmacist at National Taiwan University Hospital before earning a Master of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University. She now serves as a Health Affairs Specialist at the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office, where her work in health diplomacy bridges Taiwan and the U.S. through health policy and international cooperation. Raised in a home steeped in classical music and the arts, P.Y. Lin plays piano and continues to find joy in creative expression—whether through sound, image, or language. Fluent in Mandarin, English, and Japanese, and currently learning Greek and French, she also enjoys sailing and the calm, clarity, and perspective it brings. She describes herself as “a little bit of everything,” a perspective that deepens her appreciation for cultural exchange and connection.

Yorgos Raskovic holds a Master’s Degree in International Affairs and Economic Development from the George Washington University and has built a career at the intersection of economic development, policy analysis, and strategic communications. Raskovic has worked extensively on projects related to energy markets, sustainability policy, and regulatory reform, focusing on bridging technical analysis with stakeholder engagement. His previous experience includes roles in the Greek Embassy to the U.S., the World Bank and the European Union, where he specialized in advancing European Union interests in the US and regulatory reforms in EU member states. His expertise spans operational strategy, process mapping, data analytics, and risk assessment, with a strong track record of delivering results in highly matrixed environments. Raskovic has also contributed to major industry reports in the topics of renewable energy, new technologies, and power systems reform. In his free time, he enjoys historical research, creative writing, and exploring global culinary scenes.

Jessica Yergin is the co-founder of Tails of Connection, an online dog training community for modern pet parents with a rapidly growing audience on Instagram and Substack. A passionate advocate for the arts and storytelling, she brings over a decade of experience in digital strategy and content leadership, with past roles at CNN, ABC News, and Charter Communications. Jessica holds a B.A. in Political Science from Barnard College and studied classical flute performance with Linda Chesis through the joint program between Barnard and the Manhattan School of Music. Recently, she has rekindled her love for the flute and has been studying with acclaimed flutist Zofia Neugebauer. A lifelong supporter of the performing arts, she’s excited to bring her creative and digital expertise to the Washington Performing Arts Junior Board. Jessica lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband, two young daughters, and their very charming sheepadoodle.

ABOUT WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS

One of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, Washington Performing Arts has engaged for 60 years 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 online, 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."

Follow Washington Performing Arts on Social Media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonPerformingArtsSociety>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/washingtonperformingarts/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/wpasadmin>

Threads: <https://www.threads.com/@washingtonperformingarts>

###