



WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS

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WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS CHILDREN OF THE GOSPEL CHOIR CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF ARTISTRY, ADVOCACY, AND LEGACY AT JUNE 1 CONCERT

More than 50 COTG alumni return to Washington, D.C., to participate in the organization's first Reunion Choir homecoming

WASHINGTON— Past and present members of Washington Performing Arts Children of the Gospel Choir (COTG) will reunite for a special concert on **June 1 at 7:00 p.m. in Lisner Auditorium** [730 21st St NW, Washington, D.C.] to celebrate the choir's 30th anniversary. The concert program focuses on COTG's ongoing commitment to artistry, advocacy, and legacy, and includes spoken word by **Dr. Raynetta Wiggins** and performed by COTG members, with appearances by former Artistic Directors of COTG **Evelyn Simpson-Curenton**, **Dr. Thomas Tyler** and choreographer **Diedre Neal**, along with current Artistic Director **Michele Fowlin**. Fowlin envisions the performance as a celebration of COTG's history and a testament to its strong future. Tickets for the concert range \$30-\$40 and are available for purchase at www.washingtonperformingarts.org/event/children-of-the-gospel-choir.

For the past three decades, the Washington Performing Arts Children of the Gospel Choir has been inspiring, motivating and entertaining the DMV community.

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“Gospel music is a conduit: no matter what walk of life you come from, you can relate,” Fowlin said. “It brings harmony, peace, solidarity, and unity. I can't think of another genre of music that can transcend a message with that kind of magnitude and meaning than gospel.”

Chosen through a competitive audition process, Children of the Gospel Choir members from D.C., Maryland, and Virginia commit to participating in a year of choral training, intensive workshops, and a variety of performance experiences. For students in grades four through 12, COTG promotes an environment of opportunity, self-confidence, teamwork and respect. Recently featured on NPR's *From the Top*, COTG has performed with legendary artists such as Matthew Whitaker at the historic Lincoln Theatre, Grammy-winning pop singer Sara Bareilles at the White House, and at the Washington National Cathedral for the Inaugural Prayer Services for President Barack Obama, and the National Memorial Service for Nelson Mandela.

“As a COTG alum, it's like coming back home full circle,” David Powell, Director of Gospel Music Programs said. “It's seeing the resources that helped shape my perspective on art. It's seeing the mentors, colleagues, teachers that I have been connected to, give me inspiration and show me that I've had this very thing as a leader; this very thing as an artist and administrator in me to continue the legacy.”

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, 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.



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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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