



**WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS**

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**CONTACT: Amanda Sweet
(347) 564-3371
amanda@bucklesweet.com**

**Washington Performing Arts Presents *Modern Warrior LIVE*
Featuring Musician Dominick Farinacci and U.S. Combat Veteran Jaymes Poling**

***Jazz-infused performance honors Military Appreciation and
Mental Health Awareness months this May***

**\$15 tickets available for members of the military and veterans,
military families, and caretakers**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Washington Performing Arts presents the powerful music and storytelling production *Modern Warrior LIVE* on **Saturday, May 10 at 7:30 p.m.** at Lisner Auditorium (730 21st St NW, Washington, D.C.). Created by **Dominick Farinacci** (internationally acclaimed jazz musician and former ambassador to Jazz at Lincoln Center), *Modern Warrior LIVE* brings a highly emotional musical performance together with the harrowing story of U.S. combat veteran **Jaymes Poling's** experiences in war and his deeply personal process of transitioning back to civilian life.

Narrated by Poling himself, the musical performance led by Farinacci features a group of celebrated artists across multiple genres that seamlessly weaves throughout Poling's story that speaks to the universal themes of resilience, healing, and our human ability to overcome. The performance features an evocative jazz-infused score performed by top **vocalists Shenel Johns** (regularly featured with Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, including in "Billie and the Boys") **and Will Blaze** (performs with Talib Kweli and Durand Bernarr), **pianist Jonathan Thomas** ("Stunningly good!" *The New York Times*), **drummer Gabe Jones** (known for his work across jazz, gospel, funk, and R&B genres), and others.

"I wanted to create a new way of storytelling that brings together an impactful story (told by the individual whose story it is) with the power of music," says **Farinacci**. "My compositional approach was to orchestrate musically what was going on in Jaymes's mind before, during and

after combat. Throughout the show, the audience is experiencing this story in two ways at the same time – through Jaymes’s own words, and through the music.”

“Dominick Farinacci is hands-down, one of the smartest and most gifted musicians of our time, and it’s been thrilling to follow his career over the past 20 years, said **Washington Performing Arts President & CEO Jenny Bilfield**. “He has assembled a band of top tier jazz virtuosos for *Modern Warrior Live*, fashioning a score that illuminates and complements Jaymes Poling’s breathtaking narrative. The combination of deeply personal storytelling and great music are at the heart of this production.”

Washington Performing Arts Board Chair Rudy Burwell said: “As a retired Army Colonel, I am so proud that we are presenting this powerful program. *Modern Warrior LIVE* translates the soul and visceral impact of military service into a language civilians can feel, revealing that beneath tactical expertise lies a universal human experience that connects us all. It is so important to me that we continue to find ways to engage our military and veteran community through art as a way of building understanding, connection, and healing.”

Since its debut in 2017, *Modern Warrior LIVE* has reached more than **10,000 veterans** and **30,000 civilians** through over **150 performances** nationwide. The production has earned recognition from the **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**, the **26th U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis**, and has been featured at major events and institutions including **Amazon Headquarters** and the **National Council for Mental Wellbeing Conference**, where it opened for **Brené Brown**.

The Washington Performing Arts presentation aligns with **Military Appreciation Month** and **Mental Health Awareness Month**, amplifying the need for conversation around the challenges veterans face and the universal journey of healing.

PERFORMERS

Dominick Farinacci, trumpet

Jaymes Poling, narrator

Shenel Johns, vocal

Will Blaze, vocal

Jonathan Thomas, piano

Gabe Jones, drums

Members of the military and veterans, military families, and caretakers may access \$15 tickets by calling the Washington Performing Arts box office at (202) 785-9727 or using code MILITARY at [WashingtonPerformingArts.com](https://www.WashingtonPerformingArts.com). **Tickets for the general public are \$75** and available at [WashingtonPerformingArts.com](https://www.WashingtonPerformingArts.com).

The performance is recommended for ages 12 and older; features strong language and discussion of mental health and wartime violence. The performance will be followed by a panel discussion (free) focused on the power of the arts in healing with Poling, Farinacci, and others.

Modern Warrior LIVE is an immersive music and storytelling production created by internationally acclaimed musician Dominick Farinacci, featuring U.S. combat veteran Jaymes Poling who recounts his experience across three tours in Afghanistan, the psychological challenges he faced coming home, and his journey managing his mental health. To date, Modern Warrior LIVE has been performed more than 150 times, receiving overwhelming recognition from audiences and military leaders alike, and has established major national partnerships with mental health organizations and initiatives, bringing vital resources to audiences throughout the country.

Jaymes Poling brings to Modern Warrior LIVE the fully immersed experience of a three-tour warrior with the 82nd Airborne in Afghanistan. Dealing with the memories of war, the loss of friends, and the isolation a combat veteran finds when leaving the military, Jaymes began to find through narrative arts and dynamic public speaking that the potential for growth can indeed follow adversity. Jaymes grew up in Warren, Ohio, and enlisted in the U.S. Army at the age of 17. He was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg, North Carolina as an infantryman. During his eight years with the division, he spent three years fighting in Afghanistan as a Machine Gunner and Squad Leader. He earned a finance degree at John Carroll University in May 2018; he draws upon that knowledge and his armed forces experience in managing Modern Warrior's nonprofit operations and business planning.

Dominick Farinacci ranks among the most acclaimed trumpeters and educators of his generation, with a list of career achievements that push beyond the conventional notions of recognition for a jazz musician. He is hailed by *The New York Times* as "a trumpeter of abundant poise," who "plays beautifully," and "brings true musicality," and has been featured in *Vanity Fair* and on *Good Morning America*. The late music icon **Quincy Jones** said of Dominick's achievement integrating music and important social causes, "this kid is 360 degrees," and his latest series of EP releases have garnered more than 17 million streams on Spotify. His star-filled 2016 album, *Short Stories*, was developed with music-industry legend and producer Tommy LiPuma. Six years later, Farinacci received the Cleveland Arts Prize, arguably his hometown's most prestigious honor.

ABOUT WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS

One of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, Washington Performing Arts champions the arts as a unifying force and 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.

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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