



**WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 12, 2020

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE:

In wake of COVID-19–related D.C. State of Emergency, Washington Performing Arts moves Gala online, cancels/reschedules other events through March 21

- ***March 13 Kronos Quartet and March 21 Veronica Swift concerts canceled***
- ***March 14 Gala performances, auction to be live-streamed without audience***
- ***March 21 The Black Love Experience co-presentation rescheduled for August 29***

Washington, D.C. – Washington Performing Arts announced today that, in light of the increasing threat of coronavirus disease 2019/COVID-19 the metro D.C. region and in response to Mayor Muriel Bowser’s declaration yesterday of a state of emergency in the District, it is canceling, rescheduling, and—in the case of its annual Gala—*transforming* all public events through Saturday, March 21.

The first event to be impacted by the decision, the scheduled performance of Terry Riley’s *Sun Rings* by **Kronos Quartet with the Choral Arts Chamber Singers** on Friday, March 13, at Lisner Auditorium has been canceled outright. Also canceled is a performance by **Veronica Swift** on Saturday, March 21, at Sixth and I. Neither of these events will be rescheduled in the 2019/20 Season. Ticket-holders will be contacted directly concerning ticket exchanges and refunds.

Originally scheduled for Saturday, March 14, at the National Building Museum, **WPA’s 2020 Gala, “A Celebration of Women,” will be transformed into an online livestream** on the same evening (exact time TBA), staged *without an audience*, featuring all originally scheduled performers, including mezzo-soprano **J’Nai Bridges**, WPA Mars Arts D.C. Ensemble-in-Residence **The String Queens**, and the **WPA Children of the Gospel Choir**. Both the silent and live auctions will also take place as planned, with gala supporters bidding remotely. The 2020 Gala Honoree is Salamander Hotels & Resorts founder and CEO **Sheila C. Johnson**, who, on short notice, has offered an event space at one of Salamander’s locations as the “closed set” of this unconventional gala livestream.

Lastly, **The Black Love Experience 2020**, a co-presentation of Nubian Hueman, Washington Performing Arts, and others, originally scheduled for Saturday, March 21 at THEARC, has been rescheduled for the same venue on Saturday, August 29. More information at blackloveexperience.com.

“Earlier this week, we informed our Washington Performing Arts family that, pending formal advisories from relevant medical and/or governmental authorities, we were cautiously proceeding with events as scheduled while monitoring the coronavirus situation in the region continuously,” said Jenny Bilfield, Washington Performing Arts President and CEO. “Now, less than two days later, we have crossed the threshold from caution to action and have immediately responded in the interest of the public welfare. We deeply regret that we will not be able to share performances by the Kronos Quartet, Choral Arts Chamber Singers, and Veronica Swift with our audiences this season. But we are overjoyed that we will be able to produce our Gala—and pay tribute to Sheila Johnson and so many other amazing women, including our devoted Women’s Committee—in this very 21st-century, virtual format. Our onetime ‘mass gathering’ is now a ‘massive online gathering,’ safe for all to enjoy from the comfort of their own homes. We’re also very pleased that lead presenter Nubian Hueman has been able to pivot quickly and secure a new date for The Black Love Experience, a much-beloved D.C. celebration of ‘Black excellence and love’ in which we’re thrilled to collaborate for the first time.”

Washington Performing Arts will continue to provide regular updates on the impact of COVID-19 on its programming—including the status of events scheduled after March 21—in the coming days, as the coronavirus situation in the region continues to evolve.

About Washington Performing Arts

One of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, Washington Performing Arts has engaged for more than a half-century with artists, audiences, students, and civic life. The city is truly our stage: in venues ranging from concert halls and clubs to public parks, we present 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.

Washington Performing Arts deeply values its partnerships with local organizations and other arts institutions. Through events in myriad performance venues and neighborhoods, Washington Performing Arts engages international visiting artists in community programs and introduces 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 educational programs.

Our achievements have been recognized with a National Medal of Arts and with three Mayor’s Arts Awards from the D.C. 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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