

The Annenberg Center Presents Pianist Sullivan Fortner, Livestreamed Thursday, December 17

***Celebrate the holidays with an evening of solo piano by this
up-and-coming jazz star***

(Philadelphia – December 8, 2020) — **The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** presents jazz pianist **Sullivan Fortner**, streamed live from the Annenberg Center on **Thursday, December 17 at 7 PM**.

With “an extravagant amount of talent and a hyperactive flow on the keyboard,” (*The New York Times*) **Sullivan Fortner** makes his Annenberg Center debut. This Grammy® Award-winning pianist pulls distinct elements from different eras for a musical style that preserves the tradition and evolves the sound of jazz and blues. This is an original, live event performed on the Annenberg Center stage and streamed online. It will include an interactive Q&A with the performer. Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for more information.

About Sullivan Fortner

For the past decade, Sullivan Fortner has been stretching deep-rooted talents as a pianist, composer, band leader and uncompromising individualist. The Grammy® Award-winning artist received international praise as both key player and producer for his collaborative work on *The Window* (Mack Avenue Records, 2018) alongside multi-Grammy® Award-winner, vocalist-composer Cécile McLorin Salvant. As a solo leader, he has released *Moments Preserved* (Decca Records, 2018) and *Aria* (Impulse! Records, 2015) to critical acclaim, and he’s only getting started. This past year, Fortner earned recognition in multiple *DownBeat* Critics’ Poll categories, winning first place in Rising Star Piano and Rising Star Jazz Artist.

In addition to associations with diverse voices such as Wynton Marsalis, Paul Simon, Diane Reeves, Etienne Charles and John Scofield, Fortner’s frequent and longtime collaborators have included Ambrose Akinmusire, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Stefon Harris, Kassa Overall, Tivon Pennicott, Pete Bernstein, Nicholas Payton, Billy Hart, Gary Bartz, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Fred Hersch and Roy Hargrove. The highly sought-after improviser has performed across the country and throughout the world at cultural institutions such as Jazz at Lincoln Center, Jazz Standard, Smalls Jazz Club and New Orleans clubs as well as celebrated festivals including Newport, Monterey, Discover, Tri-C JazzFest and Gilmore Keyboard, among others. In 2019, Fortner brought his band to the historic Village Vanguard for a week-long engagement as a leader. His notable studio contributions include work on Etienne Charles’s *Kaiso* (Culture Shock, 2011), Donald Harrison’s *Quantum Leap* (FOMP Records, 2010) and Theo Croker’s *The Fundamentals* (Left Sided Music, 2007).

Playing solo or leading an orchestra, Fortner engages harmony and rhythmic ideas through curiosity and clarity. Within phrases, he finds universes, and listeners often hear how he’s moved by his exploration of each note. Coming up in New Orleans, Fortner began playing piano at age seven, following a storied lineage of improvisers and masters of time and every iteration of the blues. He earned his bachelor’s degree from the Oberlin Conservatory and his master’s in jazz performance from Manhattan School of Music (MSM). A champion of

mentorship, Fortner has offered masterclasses at MSM, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Purdue University, Lafayette Summer Music Workshop, Belmont University and Oberlin Conservatory where he has held a faculty position.

Pulling distinct elements from different eras, Fortner's artistry preserves the tradition and evolves the sound. He seeks connections among different musical styles that are deeply soulful and wildly inventive. Both his works and his insights have been featured in culturally iconic publications, from *The New York Times* to *The Root*. Accolades include the 2015 Cole Porter Fellowship by the American Pianists Association, a Leonore Annenberg Arts Fellowship and the 2016 Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists.

About the Annenberg Center's 2020-21 Digital Season

The Annenberg Center's fall 2020 digital season comprises livestreamed performances by top dance companies, outstanding jazz artists making their Annenberg Center debuts, and a collaborative early music performance, in addition to screenings of recently released independent films. The live performances are broadcast using state-of-the-art digital technology from the Prince or Zellerbach Theatre, integrating live chat, and concluding with interactive discussions with the creators and performers. Livestreamed performances are available online for 48 hours after the start time for those who purchased access. **The spring 2021 digital season will be announced in mid-December.**

About the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts serves as a major cultural destination and crossroads connecting the University of Pennsylvania and the Greater Philadelphia region through innovative human expression in theatre, music, dance and film, serving an annual audience of over 80,000. The Annenberg Center also serves as a key resource for the arts at Penn, connecting master artists with Penn students in support of and as an enhancement to the arts curriculum. Student performing arts groups are also key users of the Annenberg Center's multiple performance and rehearsal spaces, while also staffing many operational roles throughout the academic year. In reflection of Penn's core values as a world-respected academic institution, the Annenberg Center emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence, diversity and rigor in its presentations; prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences and groups it serves; manages outstanding performance, conference and meeting facilities; and stresses comprehensive event planning, production support and customer service. The Annenberg Center is a major provider of performing arts access for school children and actively engages a broad range of primary, secondary and post-secondary student audiences and inclusive constituencies from the campus, community and surrounding region. Visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](https://www.annenbergcenter.org).

CALENDAR LISTING

LIVESTREAM

Sullivan Fortner

Thursday, December 17, 7 PM

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Access Information for Sullivan Fortner

Visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](https://www.annenbergcenter.org) to purchase access to this show until 7:30 PM on December 17.

The performance may be watched live at 7 PM on December 17 to participate in the chat and artist Q&A. It will be available on-demand to ticketholders through December 19. Visit the Annenberg Center's [FAQs](#) for additional details.

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