



The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Announces Its Spring 2021 Digital Season

*Six dance and six musical performances will be streamed
live from Annenberg Center stages*

*Dance livestreams include Paul Taylor Dance Company, HopeBoykinDance,
Rennie Harris Puremovement, Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers, Ayodele Casel,
and Matthew Neenan*

*Music livestreams include Samara Joy and Pasquale Grasso, Duo Tempesta di Mare,
Thomas Kraines and Kinan Abou-afach, Zakir Hussain, Keyon Harrold, and
Eddie Palmieri Afro-Caribbean Jazz Quartet*

(Philadelphia – December 17, 2020) — Building on the success of its fall digital season, the [Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts](#) at the University of Pennsylvania announces a series of six dance and six musical performances, streamed live, for the **spring 2021 digital season**, beginning **February 4**.

The Annenberg Center’s spring 2021 digital season reflects the wide range of diverse artists and art forms presented on its stages during its near 50-year history. Designed specifically for the virtual stage, these original performances feature world-renowned musicians and dance ensembles, rising stars, world premieres, and Philadelphia debuts, along with programming that takes inspiration from the extraordinary social changes of the past nine months. Each presentation integrates live chat and interactive Q&A with the performers. The independent film series will be announced in early 2021. **For more information, visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](#).**

“This past fall, as one of only a few venues in the Philadelphia area that was streaming live performances, we were enormously gratified to be able to give artists the chance to take the stage and share their inspirational work once again,” said Executive and Artistic Director Christopher A. Gruits. “And we’re excited that our spring digital season will build on this successful foundation. So many artists have been fueled by the challenges of the past nine months to create deeply powerful programming, exploring and reflecting our experiences. We look forward to presenting this important work in a number of world premieres, and we also are eager to see many well-loved artists, whose work will lift us up and provide joy and solace.”

DANCE

Dance performances in the Annenberg Center’s spring digital season include the **Paul Taylor Dance Company**, featuring six dancers in iconic works that explore contrasting sides of human nature. **(February 18)** **HopeBoykinDance**’s performance marks Boykin’s Philadelphia choreographic debut. Beloved for her tenures with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and PHILADANCO, Boykin will dance alongside five other dancers in a program of world premiere works. **(March 11)**

Rennie Harris Puremovement returns to the Annenberg Center with an evening of works including two that directly reflect on current tragedies facing our nation. **(April 1) Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers** brings a program that includes the world premiere of *The Wind*, performed by Kun-Yang Lin himself, who returns to the stage for the first time since his retirement from dancing in 2013. In collective, the program will reflect on the state of the world amidst a pandemic with prevailing messages of hope and unity. **(April 22)**

Ayodele Casel, whom Gregory Hines called “one of the top young tap dancers in the world,” makes her Philadelphia debut in an all-female program entitled *Chasing Magic*, alongside singer/songwriter Crystal Monee Hall and acclaimed pianist Anastasia Victory. **(May 6) Matthew Neenan**, Choreographer in Residence at Pennsylvania Ballet and co-founder of BalletX, closes out the season with a site-specific world premiere exploring intimacy in isolation. **(May 27)**

MUSIC

Jazz vocalist **Samara Joy** and guitarist **Pasquale Grasso** make their Annenberg Center debut performing a mix of originals and American Songbook classics, offering a glimpse of the future of jazz. **(February 4) Duo Tempesta di Mare** features the group’s founding artistic co-directors, **Gwyn Roberts**, recorder and flute, and **Richard Stone**, theorbo, exploring works by composers who stayed close to home, as performers have currently been forced to do during the COVID-19 pandemic. **(February 25)**

Cellist **Thomas Kraines** of the Daedalus Quartet, Penn’s quartet-in-residence, joins forces with cellist, oudist, and composer **Kinan Abou-afach** for a program of original compositions and improvisations, as well as the world premiere of a new work composed by Gene Coleman. **(March 4) Zakir Hussain**, the pre-eminent tabla virtuoso of our time and widely considered a chief architect of contemporary world music, returns to the Annenberg Center for a lively showcase of Indian music, joined by Pezhham Akhavass (tombek and Iranian percussion), Marcus Gilmore (drums) and Abbos Kosimov (doyra and Uzbek percussion). **(April 8)**

Hailed as the “future of the trumpet” by Wynton Marsalis, **Keyon Harrold** is a sought-after, electric young artist whose music draws on elements of jazz, classical, rock, blues and hip-hop. **(April 15)** Legendary pianist, bandleader and beloved patriarch of Latin jazz **Eddie Palmieri** has amassed nine Grammy® Awards while remaining on the cutting edge of Afro-Caribbean music since the early 1960s. Known for his bold charisma and innovative drive, Palmieri fuses his Puerto Rican heritage with the complexity of jazz influences as one of the great pianists of his era. **(May 7)**

For full program details see the [chronological calendar](#) on the Annenberg Center’s website.

About the Annenberg Center’s Digital Season

The Annenberg Center’s live performances are streamed using state-of-the-art digital technology from the Prince and Zellerbach theatres. The cameras and related technology to enable high-quality live streaming was made possible through a gift from **Paul R. Wiggin**, a graduate of the Wharton School of Business and a member of the Annenberg Center’s Board of Advisors. The one-night-only live presentations are planned with the digital medium in mind, lasting about one hour, integrating live chat, and concluding with interactive discussions with the creators and performers. Livestreamed performances are available online for ticket holders for 48 hours after the start time.

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.

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