



Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts to Rebrand as Penn Live Arts

The new identity announcement tees up the release of the performing art center's 21/22 season curated by Executive and Artistic Director Christopher A. Gruits

Philadelphia, PA - June 29, 2021 - The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia's leading multidisciplinary arts presenter and one of the nation's premier urban performing arts centers on a university campus, announced today a rebrand and name change to Penn Live Arts. The announcement serves as a redefining moment for the organization as it begins a multi-year 50th anniversary celebration.

The rebrand to Penn Live Arts honors the Annenberg Center's long legacy of world-class quality and progressive artistry, while also positioning the organization for future growth. Penn Live Arts will serve as the cohesive brand experience in which the performing arts center's diverse performance, event and University of Pennsylvania offerings will live. The change also heralds a wider variety of programming for audiences including early and new music, cirque, digital offerings, as well as presentations outside the physical Annenberg Center space and a deeper integration with the University of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia communities.

A more interconnected arts culture at the University of Pennsylvania

The Annenberg Center has long served as a central asset to student life at the University of Pennsylvania, providing access to world-class artists and performances that bolster the overall student and faculty experience. Penn Live Arts embodies this deeper integration, as exemplified through thematic programming, artist residencies, masterclasses, workshops and by fostering professional development opportunities for Penn students. Additionally, Penn Live Arts will bridge campus and community by offering greater access to the world-class academic expertise and resources of an Ivy League University.

"Penn Live Arts is the culmination of the efforts and dedication over the last several years to continually innovate, connect and offer transformative artistic experiences. Our new name more accurately reflects our position as Philadelphia's leading presenter of diverse and cutting-edge programming, along with a deeper integration with the University of Pennsylvania," said Christopher Gruits, Executive and Artistic Director of Penn Live Arts. "It's fitting to kick off our multi-year 50th anniversary celebration with the announcement of our new brand and identity and begin this exciting new chapter of progress. Our goal is that this rebrand serves as the catalyst for new performance works, new creativity and new connections both in and outside of the theatre."

Penn Live Arts 21/22 Season

While there are still pandemic-related limitations for artists and touring, audiences will begin to experience the expanded benefits under Penn Live Arts in the upcoming 21/22 season. The 21/22 season reflects Penn Live Arts' ambitious path with a wider variety of programming including the best artists, from iconic legends to rising stars, with many U.S. and Philadelphia premieres.

21/22 season audiences will also enjoy more innovative performances hosted outside the Annenberg Center walls including **Alarm Will Sound** at Morris Arboretum in Chestnut Hill and **The Crossing** at Church of the Holy Trinity in Rittenhouse, along with a broad range of beloved dance companies, jazz greats, a brand-new, family-friendly cirque series and a season-long film line-up to be announced this fall.

"If there is anything the past year has reinforced, it is our passion for live performance, as it is core to our mission," continued Gruits. "We are grateful and proud to have kept artists performing live on the virtual stage, bringing audiences numerous world premieres and debuts as one of the few arts organizations in the city to offer real-time, digital performances. As we safely return to the theatre for our 21/22 season, we eagerly look ahead to our commemorative 50th anniversary under our new brand, Penn Live Arts, as we have much to celebrate. We are thrilled to continue our partnerships with The Crossing, World Cafe Live and Penn's Italian Studies department. The world-class and progressive artistry featured in our 21/22 season will inspire, challenge and excite both new and existing audiences."

21/22 Season Highlights

Dance

- **Dorrance Dance** - In this Penn Live Arts debut and Philadelphia premiere, tap dance meets holiday favorites in *The Nutcracker Suite*, boasting boogies, slides, struts and dives into Duke Ellington's intoxicating interpretation of the Tchaikovsky classic. (December 9-11, 2021)
- **Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo** - Savagely funny satire meets seriously stunning ballet in the gender-bending Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. Dancing the fine line between high art and high camp, the Trocks, as they're lovingly called, are an all-male ballet troupe that honors ballet classics. (January 20-22, 2022)
- **Trinity Irish Dance Company** - The birthplace of progressive Irish dance, this troupe fuses Ireland's vibrant tradition and legacy with ever-evolving, American innovation for an awe-inspiring performance. (February 18-19, 2022)
- **Rennie Harris: *LIFTED*** - Rennie Harris, "the most brilliant hip-hop choreographer in America," (*The New Yorker*) returns with the Philadelphia premiere of *LIFTED*. This evening-length, hip-hop theatre production merges the rhythms of house music with the moving vocals of a live gospel choir to explore community and spirituality through dance.

(March 18-19, 2022)

- **Mark Morris Dance Group, *Pepperland*** - Mark Morris, “the most successful and influential choreographer alive,” (*The New York Times*) celebrates the Beatles’ groundbreaking album *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* with his colorful and exuberant *Pepperland*. (May 5 -7, 2022)
- **MOMIX, *Alice*** - Go down the rabbit hole with MOMIX! In the Philadelphia premiere of *Alice*, Moses Pendleton creates a uniquely MOMIX, fantastical Wonderland where the human body has no limits and nothing is what it appears. (June 2-4, 2022)

Jazz

- **Maceo Parker** - The king of funk and one of the primary architects of modern R&B returns to the Penn Live Arts’ stage on the heels of a brand-new album, his first in eight years, which blends raw, old school funk with the flavors of New Orleans. (November 19, 2021)
- **Cécile McLorin Salvant** - The multi-Grammy® Award winner makes her Penn Live Arts debut, bringing historical perspective, a sense of theatricality and an enlightened musical understanding to both jazz standards and original compositions. (December 12, 2021)
- **Campbell Brothers, John Coltrane’s *A Love Supreme*** - With their signature slide guitars, these masters of a little-known American musical tradition called sacred steel perform a Philadelphia premiere offering “a soul-stirring blend of gospel and the power and volume of electric blues and rock.” (NPR) (January 28, 2022)
- **The Jazz Gallery All-Stars** - Eight leading creative voices from New York City’s Jazz Gallery come together to celebrate its ongoing legacy. Saxophonists Miguel Zenón and Morgan Guerin, vibraphonist Joel Ross, guitarist Charles Altura, pianist Gerald Clayton, bassist Linda Oh, drummer Kendrick Scott and guest vocalist Renee Neufville perform an evening of original compositions and some favorites by The Jazz Gallery founder, Roy Hargrove. (February 4, 2022)
- **Ravi Coltrane** - This Grammy®-nominated musician continues the legacy he inherited by carving out his own individual sound. As a bandleader who has collaborated with a veritable who’s who of jazz, Coltrane’s ensemble “demonstrates its marvelous technical capabilities and keen musicianship, and their imaginative interpretations suggest strength and resolve, a fluid embodiment of question and answer,” (NPR) making for a fascinating musical journey. (March 26, 2022)
- **SFJAZZ Collective** - Returning to the Penn Live Arts stage boasting four exciting new members: Lizz Wright (vocals), Chris Potter (saxophone), Aneesa Strings (bass) and Kendrick A.D. Scott (drums), the program for this special tour features new compositions by the band, all inspired by and in response to the extraordinary social and global issues we have faced over the last year. (April 3, 2022)

World

- **An Evening with Chris Thile** - Making his Penn Live Arts debut, multiple Grammy® Award winner and MacArthur Fellow Chris Thile is a mandolinist, composer and vocalist whose music is “full of whimsy and breathless virtuosity” (*The New York Times*). Co-presented with World Cafe Live. (December 16, 2021)
- **Zakir Hussain, Triveni** - Zakir Hussain returns to our stage, joined for the first time by Kala Ramnath, an innovative representative of North Indian raga tradition, and Jayanthi Kumaresh, the leading exponent of the ancient South Indian veena. An international phenomenon and true virtuoso, Hussain leads an exploration of the varied musical dialogues of North and South Indian rhythm traditions. (April 7, 2022)
- **Lila Downs** - Vocalist Lila Downs is a global superstar whose exquisite artistry bridges the musical traditions of Mexico and South America with North American folk, jazz and blues. She will perform music from her latest album, *Al Chile*. (April 21, 2022)

New Music

- **Alarm Will Sound** - Making its Penn Live Arts debut and returning to Philadelphia after a 12-year hiatus with the local premiere of ***Ten Thousand Birds*** by Pulitzer Prize and Grammy® Award-winning composer, John Luther Adams. This experiential, open-ended collection of pieces is based on native birdsong, encompassing a range of colors and instrumentation and newly informed by actual migration patterns tracked at the Morris Arboretum. (Morris Arboretum, September 25, 2021)
- **The Crossing @ Christmas, Carols After a Plague** - “America’s most astonishing choir” (*The New York Times*) performs world premieres by 12 composers of diverse background, style, experience, identity and race. Collectively, the works contemplate this unique time in history as we begin to emerge from isolation and resume experiencing music together. (Church of the Holy Trinity, December 17, 2021)
- **The Crossing, In a House Besieged** - Organist Scott Dettra joins The Crossing for the world premiere of Stacy Garrop’s *In a House Besieged*. The program also includes Lansing McCloskey’s *The Memory of Rain*, based on poems by 2011 U.S. poet laureate Philip Levine, as well as two introspective works by the Estonian spiritual minimalist, Arvo Pärt, *I am the true vine* and *The Beatitudes*. (Saint Mark’s Church, March 27, 2022)

Theatre

- **Teatro delle Albe, fedeli d’Amore** - One of Italy’s most respected contemporary theatre companies makes its Philadelphia debut with the U.S. premiere of *fedeli d’Amore* (*Love’s Faithful*) which reflects on Dante Alighieri and the contemporary world through evocative vocal, musical and visual dramaturgy. Presented in partnership with Penn’s Italian Studies program. (February 4-5, 2022)

Family

- **Cirque Mechanics, Birdhouse Factory** - Cirque Mechanics returns with the

Philadelphia premiere of *Birdhouse Factory*, offering breathtaking acrobatics, zany antics and an enchanting story of laughter, joy and, of course, birdhouses. (January 30, 2022)

- **Circa, *Humans 2.0*** - Australia's bold, contemporary circus troupe, Circa, makes an exhilarating return with a new love letter to humanity, following their smash hit, *Humans*. The Philadelphia premiere of *Humans 2.0* is a joyous, searching production where 10 performers find redemptive power in strength, sharing a much-needed message of hope for our pandemic-weary world. (March 11-12, 2022)
- **Philadelphia Children's Festival** - Performances, hands-on activities and fun for the whole family. (April 28-May 1, 2022)
- **Kalabanté, *Afrique en Cirque*** - Traditional African music and dance meet modern circus in this audacious and vibrant feast for the senses. Hailing from Guinea and now based in Montréal, Kalabanté makes its Philadelphia debut with *Afrique en Cirque*, featuring authentic dancing and astonishing acrobatic feats set to the pulsing rhythms of djembes, koras and other native West African instruments. (May 1, 2022)

For full 21/22 season performance information and to purchase subscriptions, visit PennLiveArts.org or call 215.898.3900. Single tickets will go on sale in August.

About Penn Live Arts

Penn Live Arts, previously known as the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, is the leading presenter of innovative and transformative performing arts experiences in Philadelphia, bringing world-class music, dance, theatre and film to an annual audience of over 80,000 on the University of Pennsylvania campus and at venues throughout the city. Penn Live Arts is an artistic crossroads joining Penn and the greater Philadelphia region. In reflection of Penn's core values as a world-respected academic institution, Penn Live Arts emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence and diversity in its offerings; prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences and groups it serves; manages outstanding performance, conference and meeting facilities; and boasts comprehensive event planning, production support and customer service. Penn Live Arts is a key asset for the University's students and faculty, enhancing curriculum through connections with master artists, hosting student productions on professional stages, providing career development opportunities and being a true advocate for student performing arts. Penn Live Arts broadens arts access by actively engaging a wide range of school audiences and inclusive communities from campus, the West Philadelphia neighborhood and the surrounding region. Visit PennLiveArts.org.

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