

MEDIA INFORMATION

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PBS and The WNET Group Launch #PBSForTheArts, a New Campaign Celebrating the Resiliency of the Arts in America During the COVID-19 Pandemic Shutdown and Reopening

As America's home for the arts, PBS launches an expanded slate of multiplatform arts programming beginning April 23

(ARLINGTON, Va. – April 21, 2021) Today, PBS and The WNET Group announced **#PBSForTheArts**, a multiplatform campaign that celebrates the resiliency of the arts in America during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown and reopening. The campaign features a variety of programming across broadcast and digital platforms to showcase the devastating impact of the pandemic to the arts industry. While some arts organizations did not survive the effects of the shutdown, others adapted and evolved to meet the moment, but continue to fight to make a full recovery. Launching on all platforms on Friday, April 23, the collection of **#PBSForTheArts** content will be available for broadcast on PBS and streaming on pbs.org/arts and the [PBS Video app](#). Curated conversation and digital shorts will be available on PBS social media platforms using **#PBSForTheArts**.

#PBSForTheArts kicks off with new programming filmed within the constraints of the pandemic: **GREAT PERFORMANCES “Romeo & Juliet”** (Friday, April 23 at 9:00 p.m. ET), a contemporary rendering of Shakespeare’s romantic tragedy from the National Theatre, where a company of actors in a shuttered theater bring to life the timeless tale of two young lovers who strive to transcend a world of violence and hate; **GREAT PERFORMANCES “The Arts Interrupted”** (Friday, May 14 at 9:00 p.m. ET), a new documentary special featuring the survival stories of arts organizations across America; and the new three-part series **INSIDE THE MET** (Friday, May 21 at 9:00 and 10:00 p.m. ET and Friday, May 28 at 9:00 p.m. ET), which goes behind the scenes of the

Metropolitan Museum of Art's struggle to survive amid the pandemic and its response to the urgent demands for social justice during its 150th anniversary.

As the campaign expands over the coming months, it will include new specials and original digital content from long-standing arts strands including **GREAT PERFORMANCES**, **AMERICAN MASTERS** and PBS NEWSHOUR's **CANVAS**, while **PBS DIGITAL STUDIOS**, The WNET Group and other award-winning PBS arts series will provide digital programming. PBS member stations will also contribute content to their local schedules that examine the resiliency of the arts and artists in their communities.

Exclusive **#PBSForTheArts** blogs, published on pbs.org/arts, will also spotlight the inspiring pandemic survival stories of artists across the country. From Broadway dancers and concert performers to classical musicians, visual artists, and beyond, audiences will discover how these creative, resourceful artists have kept the arts vivid and vital during the pandemic, and learn about the projects they're working on as the arts world gradually reopens.

"As we prepare for life post-COVID, it is so important that we come together to restore and revitalize the arts, which are central to the cultural health of our country," said Paula Kerger, PBS President and CEO. "Through this sweeping initiative, PBS and our member stations will showcase the resilient spirit of the arts and ensure that all Americans can continue to access extraordinary dance, theater and musical performances on public television."

As PBS's largest producer of arts programming for more than 50 years, The WNET Group, home to PBS stations THIRTEEN and WLIW21, the network NJ PBS, and arts and culture media provider ALL ARTS, will lead digital content production and PBS member station collaboration efforts nationwide. The WNET Group will gather and curate content from local musicians, actors, dancers and artists that represent the range, diversity and scope of the performing arts.

"In times of crisis, the arts have the ability to lift us up, bring us together and give us hope for a better tomorrow. We are pleased to partner with PBS to spotlight the resilience of performing arts organizations as we look forward to the return of live performances and an end to the pandemic," said Neal Shapiro, President and CEO of The WNET Group.

For more than 50 years, PBS has been the media destination for the arts, presenting dance, theater, opera, visual arts and concerts to Americans in every corner of the country. Over the past year, as the COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged the United States, it has decimated the arts community. Thousands of performers have lost their jobs as theater and dance companies, orchestras and music venues have struggled to survive or

been forced to close. Through it all, PBS has continued to deliver high-quality arts and performance programming to homes nationwide, ensuring that the arts remain accessible to all, on air through its nearly 335 local public television stations and online through pbs.org and the PBS Video app.

All filmed under COVID restrictions, the **#PBSForTheArts** collection of programs include:

GREAT PERFORMANCES “Romeo & Juliet”

Premieres: Friday, April 23, 9:00 p.m. ET

Experience a contemporary rendering of Shakespeare’s romantic tragedy from the National Theatre where a company of actors in a shuttered theater bring to life the timeless tale of two young lovers. Stars Golden Globe winner Josh O’Connor and Jessie Buckley.

GREAT PERFORMANCES “Uncle Vanya”

Premieres: Friday, May 7, 9:00 p.m. ET

Experience Anton Chekov’s masterpiece in this Olivier Award-nominated West End production adapted by Conor McPherson starring Toby Jones and Richard Armitage from London’s Harold Pinter Theater.

GREAT PERFORMANCES “The Arts Interrupted”

Premieres: Friday, May 14, 9:00 p.m. ET

How have the arts been managing during the COVID-19 pandemic? Arts organizations across America share their survival stories, along with examples of innovative performances, from COVID-19 inspired theater to site-specific operas. Learn how the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement have impacted America’s emerging artists.

WE ARE FAMILY: SONGS OF HOPE AND UNITY

Premieres: Friday, May 14, 10:00 p.m. ET

Join the American Pops Orchestra, Maestro Luke Frazier and a star-studded cast for an exciting evening of songs that bring us together. Filmed in front of a small, socially distanced live audience under strict COVID-19 mitigation procedures, the program features performances by “Crazy-Ex Girlfriend’s” Gabrielle Ruiz (joining APO from Los Angeles); “America’s Got Talent” vocalist Rayshun LaMarr; Broadway star and recording artist Morgan James; Tony Award nominee Laura Osnes; and celebrated recording artist Nova Payton. Hosted by Emmy and Tony Award winner Judith Light.

INSIDE THE MET

Premieres: Fridays, May 21-28, 9:00 p.m. ET

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the largest art museum in the Americas, prepares to celebrate its 150th birthday with a treasure trove of landmark exhibitions. When COVID-19 strikes, the world shuts down and, for the first time in its history, the Met closes its doors indefinitely. Then, in the wake of the killing of George Floyd, the museum is met with urgent demands for social justice. Facing an uncertain future and questioning its very purpose, this great institution makes history in ways no one could have predicted.

ONE VOICE: THE SONGS WE SHARE

Premieres: Friday, May 28, 10 p.m. and 10:30pm ET

Join us for a new 30-minute series featuring the American Pops Orchestra celebrating uniquely American music. Hosted by Michelle Williams of *Destiny's Child*, "The Sacred" features music that transcends its original genre and audience—music once only performed in church adapted by Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash and Aretha Franklin to be shared beyond the walls of the sanctuary. Hosted by Tony Award winner Jesse Mueller, "Broadway" features classic showtunes recorded by the Rat Pack, Johnny Mathis and other chart-topping artists of the time, as well as musical theater songs that give a broader voice to our changing society.

BEYOND THE CANVAS

Various Fridays March-July 2021

From PBS NEWSHOUR, and hosted by Amna Nawaz, this half-hour program showcases some of the nation's leading cultural creators—musicians, playwrights, comedians, costume designers, among many others—who show us how they turn their visions of the world into art. Topics to be examined include finding meaning in writing; what it takes to achieve excellence; trailblazing women in the arts; the power of music to honor the past and inspire the future; and arts of Mexico.

PBS Digital Studios – Original Episodes of SOUND FIELD

As part of an ongoing arts content partnership with the classical arts organization the Cliburn, PBS Digital Studios and General Audience Programming will partner with Twin Cities PBS to produce special episodes of the Webby-winning music education series, SOUND FIELD, in May 2021. Beyond utilizing the Cliburn's extensive library of concert performances, their roster of affiliated performers and their consultation on writing/research throughout these episodes, this collaboration will illustrate the goal of the #PBSForTheArts campaign to highlight the creative work being done by arts organizations at all levels throughout the country.

Nahre Sol, a touring pianist and classical composer and a co-host from SOUND FIELD's season one, will return for these two episodes. These SOUND FIELD episodes will showcase diversity in classical music and generate awareness about #PBSforTheArts among younger, diverse audiences across PBS digital platforms.

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About PBS

[PBS](#), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS' broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirms that PBS' premier children's media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV – including a 24/7 channel, online at [pbskids.org](#), via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](#), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](#). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](#) or by following [PBS Communications on Twitter](#).

About The WNET Group

[The WNET Group](#) creates inspiring media content and meaningful experiences for diverse audiences nationwide. It is the nonprofit parent company of New York's [THIRTEEN](#) – America's flagship PBS station – [WLIW21](#), THIRTEEN PBSKids, WLIW World and Create; Long Island's only NPR station WLIW-FM; and [ALL ARTS](#), the arts and culture media provider. The WNET Group also operates [NJ PBS](#), New Jersey's statewide public television network, and newsroom [NJ Spotlight News](#). Through these channels and streaming platforms, The WNET Group brings arts, culture, education, news, documentary, entertainment and DIY programming to more than five million viewers each month. The WNET Group's award-winning productions include signature PBS series ***Nature***, ***Great Performances***, ***American Masters***, ***PBS NewsHour Weekend*** and ***Amanpour and Company*** and trusted local news programs ***MetroFocus*** and ***NJ Spotlight News with Briana Vannozzi***. Inspiring curiosity and nurturing dreams, The WNET Group's award-winning Kids' Media and Education team produces the PBS KIDS series ***Cyberchase***, interactive ***Mission US*** history games, and resources for families, teachers and caregivers. A leading public media producer for nearly 60 years, The WNET Group presents and distributes content that fosters lifelong learning, including multiplatform initiatives addressing poverty, jobs, economic opportunity, social justice, understanding and the environment. Through Passport, station members can stream new and archival programming anytime, anywhere. Community-supported, The WNET Group represents the best in public media. Join us.