



VOICES
OF
NOW
FESTIVAL
2022
MAY 18-20



arena
stage

the mead center
for american theater

ARENA STAGE'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DEPARTMENT PRESENTS

THE 2022 VOICES OF NOW FESTIVAL

WELCOME

Thank you for joining us for three nights of multimedia plays and short films written and created by nine **Voices of Now** ensembles from the D.C. Metro area. This **Voices of Now Festival** is unlike any other. For the past two seasons **Voices of Now** artists worked at a distance to create films that documented their experiences of life, school, work and family in the midst of a pandemic. This season, artists have emerged from isolation to create and rehearse in the same physical space. The result is a series of short film pieces that feature the skills honed by the artists over the past two years combined with the first in-person **Voices of Now** performances since 2019, ushering in **Voices of Now's** return to live theater. More than 60 artists ages 11 to 38 have come together to share their stories and start conversations in their communities.

We start with a title. We then explore the title through writing, movement and discussion. Slowly a script is compiled with the words, ideas, and personal stories of the artists. What started with one small ensemble with Jefferson Junior High School students, nearly two decades ago has become a program that works in D.C., Virginia and Maryland, as well as internationally.

Voices of Now encourages artists to be thoughtful, generous and brave. In addition to training young and emerging artists, **Voices of Now** instills an excitement for exploration and dialogue. When creating their plays, artists use stories pulled directly from their lives to explore questions around topics such as loss, identity, change and personal responsibility. This results in dynamic and highly personal theater and film, intended to spark a productive dialogue among themselves, their audience, and their communities.

While VON started almost 20 years ago, the first **Voices of Now Festival** occurred in the Kogod Cradle in the 2010-2011 season when the Mead Center for American Theater opened. Festivals occurred every year until the pandemic, and VON films were released in 2020 and 2021. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the return of the annual, in-person **Voices of Now Festival** at the Mead Center for American Theater!

Enjoy the festival,
Ashley Forman
Artistic Director of Voices of Now
Director of Education

2022 VOICES OF NOW

ENSEMBLES AND PERFORMANCES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18 AT 7:30 P.M.

LIFE CYCLE Robinson Secondary School Ensemble
SAFEGUARD Jefferson Middle School Academy Ensemble
FACE-OFF Pre-Professional Ensemble
HEADSPACE Mentor Ensemble

THURSDAY, MAY 19 AT 7:30 P.M.

FACE VALUE Mead Ensemble
GROUND CONTROL Holmes Middle School Ensemble
MOVING PICTURE Key Middle School Ensemble
TIME STAMP Wendt Center for Loss and Healing Ensemble

FRIDAY, MAY 20 AT 7:30 P.M.

FACE VALUE Mead Ensemble
SHAPESHIFTER Kilmer Middle School Ensemble
FACE-OFF Pre-Professional Ensemble
HEADSPACE Mentor Ensemble

HEADSPACE

Mentor Ensemble

D.C. Metro Area

May 18 and May 20 at 7:30 p.m.

Directors and Devisers

Ashley Forman and Mauricio Pita

Film Editor

Mauricio Pita

Music and Sound Master

Roc Lee

CAST:

Reyna Berry

Winta Habtemichael

Chloe Lanyi Lari

Jasper Lavan

Zoey Miller

Jada Millhouse

Patrick Payne

Reed Roddy-Johnson

Christina Springer

Jasmine Sklarew

Samara Storvick

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What happens when we get stuck in our heads?

What memories do we need to let go of?

When did I become so terrified of loss?

SAFEGUARD

Jefferson Middle School Academy Ensemble

Washington, D.C.

May 18 at 7:30 p.m.

Directors and Devisers

Jenna Murphy and Mauricio Pita

Faculty Partners

Greg Dohmann and Christina Lee

Film Editor

Brandon Johnson

Motion Graphics

Eric Swiz

Sound Master

Roc Lee

CAST:

Makayla Butler

Mya Jefferson

Lucy Matuszeski

Harriet Stone

Esrina Weber

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How do you decide what risks are worth taking?

How do you follow rules when they don't make sense to you?

FACE-OFF

(SHORT FILM)

Pre-Professional Ensemble

D.C. Metro Area

May 18 and 20 at 7:30 p.m.

Directors and Devisers

Mauricio Pita and Lauren Miller

Film Editor

Mauricio Pita

Sound Master

Brian Jacobs Rivera

CAST:

Dupre Carter

Ty'Ree Davis

Kah'il Hicks-Jumper

Hownisha Reed

Brandee Simmons

Allie Swanson

YIP OSAPAU OSSAPAP P SAO HA
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What is the impact of not showing your emotions?"

What happens when we open up to others?

How about when we create a persona that's not authentic to who we really are?

GROUND CONTROL

Holmes Middle School Ensemble

Alexandria, VA

May 19 at 7:30 p.m.

Directors and Devisers

Mauricio Pita and Michael E. Smith

Faculty Partner

Elizabeth Murphy

Film Editor

Mauricio Pita

Sound Master

Roc Lee

CAST:

Lucy Baboyian

Mia Diaz

Kaleigh Rosania

Janiyah Strickland

Kiah Van Heerden

Mylla Van Heerden

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OSAPSP AP APSAQ

How can our actions change how others perceive us?

How does our community influence how we see ourselves?

Is it possible to create rules that are fair and also keep the school safe?

FACE VALUE

Mead Ensemble
D.C. Metro Area
May 19 and 20 at 7:30 p.m.
Directors and Devisers
Josh Bickford and Rachel Dixon
Film Editor
Eric Swiz
Sound Master
Roc Lee

CAST:

Julia Gorman
Niyee Pollard-Calliste
Cecilia Shareno
Sitina Tochterman

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ÖS ÖGTÄ PÖTPOSS · SSR P · SÄ · ÖSÄ
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“How can people with different core beliefs have meaningful and lasting relationships?”

“How can we be brave enough to be ourselves, even when it can cause conflict? Or when there is pressure to be something or someone else?”



VOICES OF NOW ARTISTIC STAFF

Ashley Forman, *Artistic Director of Voices of Now*

Ky'Lend J. Adams
Josh Bickford
Rebecca Campana
Rachel Dixon
Winta Habtemichael
Anita Maynard-Losh
Kerry McGee

Lauren V. Miller
Jenna Murphy
Mauricio Pita
Michael E. Smith
Christina Springer

VOICES OF NOW POST-PRODUCTION STAFF

Damion Boulden
Ben Gunderson
Antonio Hernandez
Brandon Johnson
Chloe Lanyi-Lari

Roc Lee
Mauricio Pita
Brian Jacobs Rivera
Eric Swiz

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PRODUCTION STAFF

Director of Community Engagement
Director of Education
School Programs Manager
Community Programs Manager
Training Programs Manager
Community Engagement Programming Coordinator
Production Manager
Festival Stage Manager
Sound Engineer
Lighting Designer and Operation

Anita Maynard-Losh
Ashley Forman
Rebecca Campana
Mauricio Pita
Mari Andrea Travis

Alan Gonzalez Bisnes
Trevor Riley
Claire Fogle
Alex Cloud
Scott Folsom

THANK YOU

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS: VOICES OF NOW

Holmes Middle School, Alexandria, VA (FCPS)

Jefferson Middle School Academy, Washington, DC (DCPS)

Key Middle School, Springfield, VA (FCPS)

Kilmer Middle School, Vienna, VA (FCPS)

Robinson Secondary School, Fairfax, VA (FCPS)

The Wendt Center for Loss and Healing, Washington, DC

George Washington University, Washington, DC

Howard University, Washington, DC



Arena Stage's Community Engagement Department would like to recognize the supporters and partners of the Voices of Now program. Without their extraordinary efforts and support, Voices of Now and our other Community Engagement program offerings would not be possible.

Voices of Now is made possible by support from the **Hattie M. Strong Foundation**, **Global Medical REIT**, **Weissberg Foundation**, **Lois & Richard England Family Foundation** and **Friends of Southwest D.C.**

Arena Stage's community engagement efforts are generously sponsored by Denie and Frank Weil; The Estate of Ms. Toni A. Ritzenberg; Hearst Foundations; AT&T; Joanne Barker; Comcast; Catherine and Chris Guttman-McCabe; National Endowment for the Arts; Global Medical REIT; Venable Foundation; Hattie M. Strong Foundation; Robert and Natalie Mandel Family Foundation; Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, Inc.; Alice Shaver Foundation; Theatre Forward; Lois & Richard England Family Foundation; Weissberg Foundation; Friends of Southwest D.C.; Wayne and Susan Jonas; Jean Shiro-Zavela and Vance Zavela; Actors' Equity Foundation; and Youth Activities Task Force (YATF) of the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly, Inc.

For more information on Arena Stage's Community Engagement programs, visit arenastage.org/voicesofnow or call 202-600-4065.



ABOUT VOICES OF NOW

Voices of Now (VON) is a program that utilizes creative writing, collaboration, movement and performance to devise autobiographical plays with ensembles made up of middle-school, high-school and adult artists. VON plays are fast-paced, collaboratively written, physical theater pieces that pose challenging social questions relevant to the artists and their communities. The plays investigate those questions through poetry, movement and the recounting of the artists' personal stories.

Originally created to work with one local middle school, the program has expanded to serve hundreds of students in the D.C. Metro Area and beyond. One of the primary goals of the program is to create positive change within the artists' communities by engaging in dialogue centered on the artists' daily experiences of their world.

Voices of Now International:

Thanks to partnerships with the U.S. Department of State, Voices of Now has gone international, growing from a program devoted to D.C.-area residents to one that works with communities around the world. Voices of Now has worked with ensembles in Zagreb and Petrinjah, Croatia; Lima, Peru; Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina; and six cities in India: Kolkata, Patna, New Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Chennai. Internationally Voices of Now has worked with professional theater artists and activists, high school students, university students and professors, survivors of human trafficking, young people with disabilities, and elderly community members. Through extended residences, ensembles created plays using writing, discussion and movement techniques. Voices of Now plays have been performed internationally in English, Croatian, Spanish, Serbian, Bosnian, Albanian, Macedonian, Slovenian, Urdu, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil and Bengali. In January-February 2019, Arena Stage artists worked with two ensembles of young adults from Croatia and an ensemble of young adults from Bosnia and Herzegovina to create plays that explore themes of change, compromise and making yourself heard during difficult times. Arena Stage is honored to represent the United States as it works with world organizations through the Voices of Now program.

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FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 8-16



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2-WEEK SESSION
July 25-August 5, 2022

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