



2020–2021
Annual Report

The Up Close and Virtual season



**CENTER FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS**

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Front cover (clockwise from top): Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra Septet’s Wynton Marsalis by Piper Ferguson. Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s Kristin Lee by Sophie Zhai. Michael Mwenso by Oluwaseye Olusa. A Step Afrika! dancer by Jati Lindsay. Back cover (clockwise from top): Jeanette Sorrell by Apollo’s Fire. Kronos Quartet violinists David Harrington and John Sherba by Wojciech Wandzel. St. Lawrence String Quartet by Marco Borggreve. Christian Sands. *THE LION KING*’s Heather Headley.



Emmaline



Photo by Stephanie Swindle Thomas

Letter from the

Director

DEAR COMMUNITY,

Thank you for making the impossible possible this past year! While “challenging” and “unprecedented” continue to feel like overused understatements, I am truly grateful to have joined the Center for the Performing Arts during an historic period in which new ideas and ways of being were embraced out of necessity.

I take our communication with you to heart, and value this annual report as an opportunity to be transparent and accountable to our communities. As we experience the re-opening of the Center for the Performing Arts for in-person events, we take a moment to pause and reflect on the previous year.

As you might be aware, the Center for the Performing Arts faced existential challenges in canceling the 2020–2021 in-person season. Instead, we programmed a free online series, *Up Close and Virtual*, in order to continue the stream of inspiration and hope from artists to audiences against so many odds.

The team transitioned to a new director midway through the year, and sustained remote and socially distant hybrid working conditions in an industry that thrives on in-person collaboration, large group gatherings, and connection.

We are part of a global network of artists, agents, and presenters who were challenged in unexpected ways and worked together to navigate new opportunities for making art and experiences possible during the quarantine.

The Center for the Performing Arts offered thirty-one free virtual events to the public, including a Juneteenth celebration featuring local scholars and artists that was produced by Michael Mwenso, our artist-in-residence, and Electric Root, his production company.

The Juneteenth event was part of the first year of the Fierce Urgency Festival. The three-year festival, led by Mwenso and produced in partnership with Electric Root, seeks to uplift, center, and celebrate Black artists and art forms. A cornerstone of the festival's inaugural year was the monthly program *Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso*, which featured conversations with artists and educators including C. Brian Williams, Samantha Speis, Bill T. Jones, Charles Dumas, B. Stephen Carpenter II, and me.

The Center for the Performing Arts morphed the popular K–12 School-Time Matinees series into an online School-Time Virtual series of four presentations offered free of charge to schools and home-school families.

We also were able to gather an intergenerational and inclusive group for the annual *Let's Dance* workshop and started a series of virtual listening sessions.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to learn from the past year's challenges and co-create arts experiences that uplift, inspire, and reimagine the possibilities for our collective future.

We could not have conjured a virtual 2020–2021 season without the gifts of the many artists, participants, donors, and sponsors who gave their talent, time, ingenuity, and generosity to the effort. We thank them all.

With appreciation,



Sita Frederick

Director, Center for the Performing Arts



Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's
Tara Helen O'Connor

Mission

The Center for the Performing Arts provides a context, through artistic connections, to the human experience. By bringing artists and audiences together we spark discovery of passion, inspiration, and inner truths. We are a motivator for creative thinking and examination of our relationship with the world.

Vision

Enriching lives through inspiring experiences



Core Values

Arts Leadership

We believe artistic distinction and exceptional experiences are the cornerstones of the Center for the Performing Arts and are integral to our position of national leadership.

Committed Stewardship

We ensure fiscal health, sustain superior facilities, create self-sustaining systems, and support the reduction of our environmental footprint through our business model, practices, and policies.

Creative Innovation

We seek and promote innovative, provocative, and risk-taking ideas and creative approaches across our organization.

People First

We value everyone who benefits from and contributes to the Center for the Performing Arts. We take pride in fostering an environment of mutual respect, teamwork, and high ethical standards in which everyone's involvement is honored, supported, and appreciated.

Service Focused

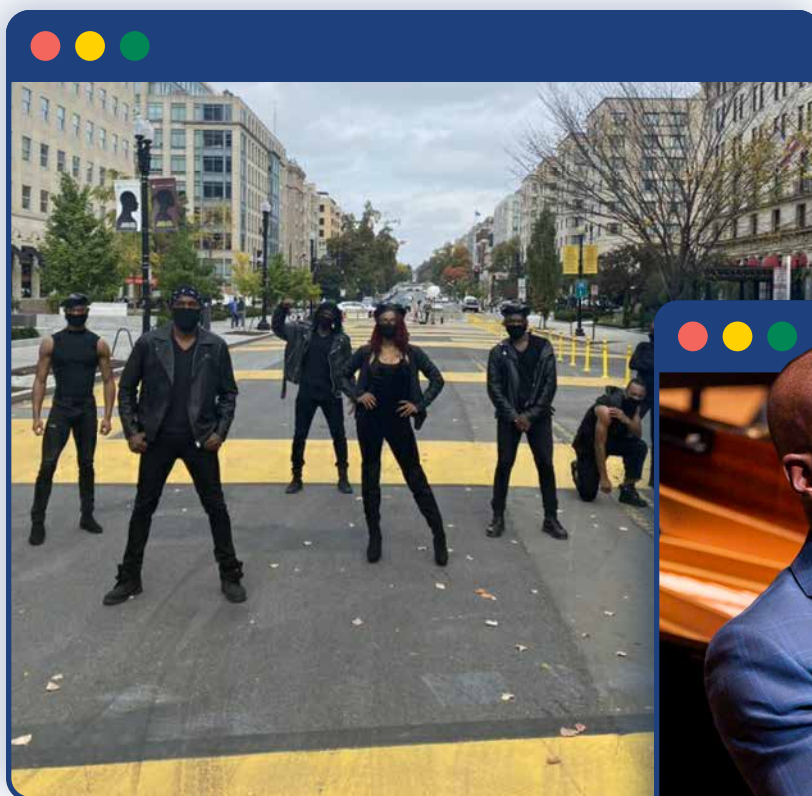
We provide our constituencies and partners with a consistently high level of support, access, and opportunities ensuring the greatest possible inclusiveness, diversity, and enrichment for those we serve.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Center for the Performing Arts embeds the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion in everything we do. Recent and persistent acts of racial injustice have renewed our resolve to make Penn State a more welcoming, inclusive, and anti-racist place through our work connecting the community to the performing arts. Acts of creation are essential for helping us relate to, empathize with, and better understand the world around us and the people in it.

We believe Black lives matter. Through sustained and meaningful effort, the Center for the Performing Arts will engage, educate, present, and continue to embrace ongoing and difficult conversations. Collectively and individually, we are committed to take action against bias, racism, and discrimination. The Center for the Performing Arts will continue to be a safe and brave place for building empathy, dialogue, listening, and respect in order to contribute to the healing process.

Toward that end, the Center for the Performing Arts planned a variety of programs designed to center Black artists in the 2020–2021 season, as well as other action steps aimed at helping us reach our goals in this arena.



Above: The December 2020 *Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso* featured C. Brian Williams, executive director of Step Afrika! The episode included the streaming premiere of *No Justice, No Peace*, a Center for the Performing Arts co-commission.

Below: *Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso's* February 2021 episode featured clarinetist Anthony McGill, who in 2020 launched a musical protest video urging people to #TakeTwoKnees against racial injustice. Photo by Chris Lee.





Above: Sphinx Virtuosi, an ensemble dedicated to addressing the underrepresentation of people of color in classical music, returned to the Center for the Performing Arts virtually in March 2021 with *This is America*. Photo by Kevin Kennedy.

The Fierce Urgency Festival, a Center for the Performing Arts partnership with musician and bandleader Michael Mwenso, featured:

- *Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso*, a monthly series of talks between Mwenso and other Black artists, live streamed with opportunities for audience questions and answers;
- Virtual session with Mwenso and select targeted audiences, such as Penn State or high school students;
- An artistic work by Step Afrika! commissioned by the Center for the Performing Arts;
- In upcoming seasons, a series of performances by Mwenso and The Shakes plus other Black artists.

The Center for the Performing Arts will engage its volunteer organizations, including the Community Advisory Council, in supporting its stated actions.

The Center for the Performing Arts will participate in a national task force assembled by Major University Presenters to examine best practices for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion through the performing arts.

The Center for the Performing Arts will continue to require the ongoing professional development of its staff members and associated personnel to address inherent bias and systemic racism.

Center for the Performing Arts Staff

Sita Frederick

Director (beginning March 15)

George Trudeau

Director and Associate Clinical Professor,
College of Arts and Architecture (through December 31)

Lea Asbell-Swanger

Assistant Director

Annie Doncsecz

Finance Director

Jara Dorsey-Lash

Associate Director of Development

Tracy Noll

Sales and Development Services Director

Laura Sullivan

Marketing and Communications Director

Amy Dupain Vashaw

Audience and Program Development Director

Shannon Arney

Assistant Ticket Manager

Erin Baskin

Graphic Designer

Erik Baxter

Multimedia Specialist

Deanna Beamer

Assistant Finance Director

Len Codispot-Anderson

Group Sales and Donor Relations Manager

Aimee Carihfield

Contracts/Logistics Coordinator

Medora Ebersole

Education and Community Programs Manager

Hope Falk

Student Engagement Manager

Tom Hesketh

Events Manager

Dr. Tom Hogan

Scholar in Residence

Christine Igoe

Ticket Manager

Kelly Kaiserian

Audience Services Manager

Robyn Krause-Hale

Director of Arts Advancement,
College of Arts and Architecture

Heather Longley

Communications Specialist

Rick MacZura

Production Supervisor

Heather Mannion

Marketing Strategy Specialist

Joi McKenzie

Downtown Ticket Manager

John Mark Rafacz

Editorial Manager

Mark Tinik

Production Supervisor

Angela Vincent

Assistant to the Director

Jason Winfield

Production Supervisor

Workforce

27 full-time employees

5 part-time employees

9 student employees

0 volunteers
(because of no in-person events)

4 interns

Volunteer Event Staff Advisory Board

Ruth Bell
Jean Bloom
Roger Cartright
Dave Cowher
Emily Gregory
Lyn Horning
Susan Houser
Mercedes Lakhtakia
Kathy Matason
Barbara Reed
Roseann Sieminski
Judi Vratarich

Community Advisory Council

chair

Melinda Stearns

vice chair

Jennifer Bailey

Judy Albrecht
Barry Bram
Linda Brown
Stephanie Corcino
Sandy Elbin
Ed Galus
Charlene Gaus
Rachel Ginder
Tom Hogan
Rich Kalin
Charles "Chick" King
Benson Lichtig
Larry Mroz
Sue Poremba
Sally Schaad
Sue Thorpe
JoAnne Westerhaus
Mary Jane Wild

student representatives

Bridget Hartshorne
Bhaskar Mukherjee
Jeremiah Rodgers

2020–2021 *Up Close and Virtual* Presentations

Each performance or engagement event was presented virtually. Each presentation was a recording, except where noted as having been live.

SEPTEMBER

Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso and guest B. Stephen Carpenter II
September 30 (Live)

OCTOBER

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's
Front Row: National Summer Evenings II
October 1–5

Tuscan Sun
Rustic Music from Baroque Italy
Apollo's Fire, The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra
Jeannette Sorrell, artistic director
October 8–15

Emmaline
October 14 (Live)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's
Front Row: National Summer Evenings III
October 22–26

Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso and guest Charles Dumas
October 28 (Live)

NOVEMBER

St. Lawrence String Quartet
Haydn Discovery
November 4–12

Jazz at Lincoln Center Presents
The Democracy! Suite
Featuring the Jazz at Lincoln Center
Orchestra Septet with Wynton Marsalis
November 11–18

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's
Front Row: National Summer Evenings IV
November 19–23

Delfeayo Marsalis
and Uptown Jazz Orchestra
November 20 (Live)
November 23–27 (Recording of the live event)

DECEMBER

Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso and guest C. Brian Williams
December 8 (Live)



Emmet Cohen

Photo by Tali Song Roth

EMMET'S PLACE

In addition to its own virtual presentations, the Center for the Performing Arts partnered with jazz pianist **Emmet Cohen**, who has performed twice at Penn State, to share his *Live from Emmet's Place* concerts on the center's Facebook page. The free concerts, featuring the **Emmet Cohen Trio** performing in Cohen's Harlem apartment, have taken place on Monday evenings since spring 2020. Most episodes of the ongoing series include one or more guest musicians.

JANUARY

**Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's
Front Row: National**
Bach: The Complete Brandenburg Concertos
January 20–27

**Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso
and guest Samantha Speis**
January 27 (Live)

FEBRUARY

Mwenso and The Shakes
February 3–10

**New Opera as Art and Social Discourse
A Conversation with the Creators of
A Marvelous Order**
February 10 (Live)
February 12–19 (Recording of the live event)

Christian Sands
February 17–24

**Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso
and guest Anthony McGill**
February 23 (Live)

MARCH

Sphinx Virtuosi
This is America
March 3–10

**Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's
Front Row: National**
Calidore String Quartet
March 10–17

LML Music Presents
The Broadway Cast Reunion Series
THE LION KING
Hosted by Lee Lessack and Robert Bannon
March 10 (Live)
March 10–14 (Recording of the live event)

Ballet Hispánico
50 Year Legacy Experience
with Artistic Director and CEO Eduardo Vilaro
March 17–24

**Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso
and guest Dashon Burton**
March 24 (Live)

Ballet Hispánico
Dance Class
March 30 (Live)

Cantus
One Giant Leap
March 31–April 7

APRIL

Kronos Quartet
Testimony
April 14–21

**Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's
Front Row: National**
Anthony McGill, clarinetist
April 21–28

**Earth Day Panel Discussion
with Penn State students
and a Small Island Big Song artist**
April 22 (Live)

Small Island Big Song
An Oceanic Songline
April 23–30

**Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso
and guests Bill T. Jones and Janet Wong**
April 28 (Live)





JUNE

Juneteenth: A Fierce Urgency Celebration!

Hosted by Michael Mwenso

**Featuring performances, reflections,
and contributions from Black artists
and Penn State faculty**

**Produced by Electric Root in partnership
with the Center for the Performing Arts
at Penn State**

June 19–21

***Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso
and guest Sita Frederick***

June 23–June 30

*Juneteenth: A Fierce
Urgency Celebration!* artist

Shariffa Ali

Photo by Tammy Shell



The arts make impact in schools and homes despite remote learning

In a typical season, the Center for the Performing Arts provides the opportunity for students and educators throughout central Pennsylvania to attend its School-Time Matinee series. The series features programs made especially for children, plus performances for middle and high school students.

Because schools were dealing with the effects of the pandemic in 2020–2021, it was important to maintain relationships built with the education community by providing arts-based learning.



The Center for the Performing Arts offered four virtual programs for educators. Each came with clearly identified stopping points so teachers could have flexibility with the material.

The School-Time Virtual series, in winter and spring 2021, featured pre-recorded versions of live performances.

For elementary-aged students, *The Snail and the Whale* by Tall Stories theatre company helped students to understand the importance of the oceans and the joy of unlikely friendships.

David Gonzalez's *Finding North* engaged older elementary and middle school students in learning important history about Underground Railroad figure John P. Parker.

Cartography told the story of five teens who meet in an immigration processing center. It shared their hopes, worries, and dreams for the lives they strive to live in the United States.

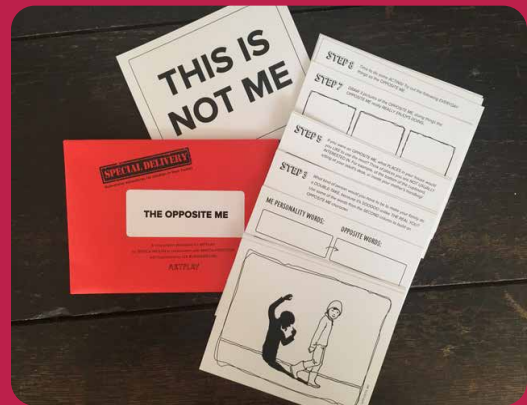
Resource materials for educators accompanied each of the pre-recorded offerings.

The Center for the Performing Arts commemorated Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month by offering an online version of the film *Small Island Big Song*. The film uses the common language of music to highlight the effects of climate change on islands in the Pacific and Indian oceans.

A pre-recorded talk accompanied the film. Putad, a Taiwan native of Amis heritage, and Anika Ullah, a Bangladeshi-American, talked about universal themes such as bullying and the importance of finding your voice.

Schools and homeschooling families from thirteen counties in central Pennsylvania participated in the School-Time Virtual programs. In all, 1,678 students and educators from twenty-three schools experienced an arts program during a time when regular field trips were unavailable.

Support from the McQuaide Blasko Endowment made the School-Time Virtual program possible.



Engaging children at home

In spring 2021, the Center for the Performing Arts also offered a subscription-based child's activity. Jessica Wilson's *Special Delivery* is an offline project aimed at engaging children's sense of independence, curiosity, and creativity.

Each subscription featured one series of six weekly themed card sets mailed directly to a family's home. Each project contained as many as fifteen instruction cards prompting a child to embark on an artistic process that activates the imagination.

Activities included turning a fear into a drawing, role-playing an opposing personality, and using objects at home to arrange a photo shoot with a grown up. The projects were intended for children ages 8–12.

Special Delivery was created with Marcia Ferguson, with design by Lee Berge-meestre. The project was originally commissioned by Melbourne, Australia's ArtPlay program.

Opposite: *The Snail and the Whale* © Tall Stories. *Finding North* photo provided. *Cartography's* Noor Hamdi and Malaika Uwamahoro photo by Elman Studio. Above: *Special Delivery* photo provided.

New Fierce Urgency Festival celebrates Black artists

In a 1967 address at New York City's Riverside Church, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. encapsulated the soul of a nation sharply divided by the Vietnam War.

"We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today," King said. "We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action."

Those powerful words ring true today. The Center for the Performing Arts is taking vigorous and positive action in the best way we know how: by promoting inclusion, equity, empathy, and belonging through the performing arts.

To that end, the 2020–2021 season included the launch of the Fierce Urgency Festival. The three-year festival — led by musician, bandleader, and historian Michael Mwenso and produced in partnership with Electric Root — is designed to uplift, center, and celebrate Black artists and art forms.

The festival began with *Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso*, an online show in which Mwenso speaks with artists familiar to Center for the Performing Arts audiences. Guests included B. Stephen Carpenter II, dean of the College of Arts and Architecture at Penn State; Charles Dumas, professor emeritus of theatre at Penn State; C. Brian Williams, founder and executive director of Step Afrika!; Samantha Speis, co-artistic director of Urban Bush Women; Bill T. Jones, choreographer, director, and founder of Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company; and Sita Frederick, Center for the Performing Arts director, dancer, and choreographer.

Year one of the festival also included monthly virtual engagements between Mwenso and various groups of students.

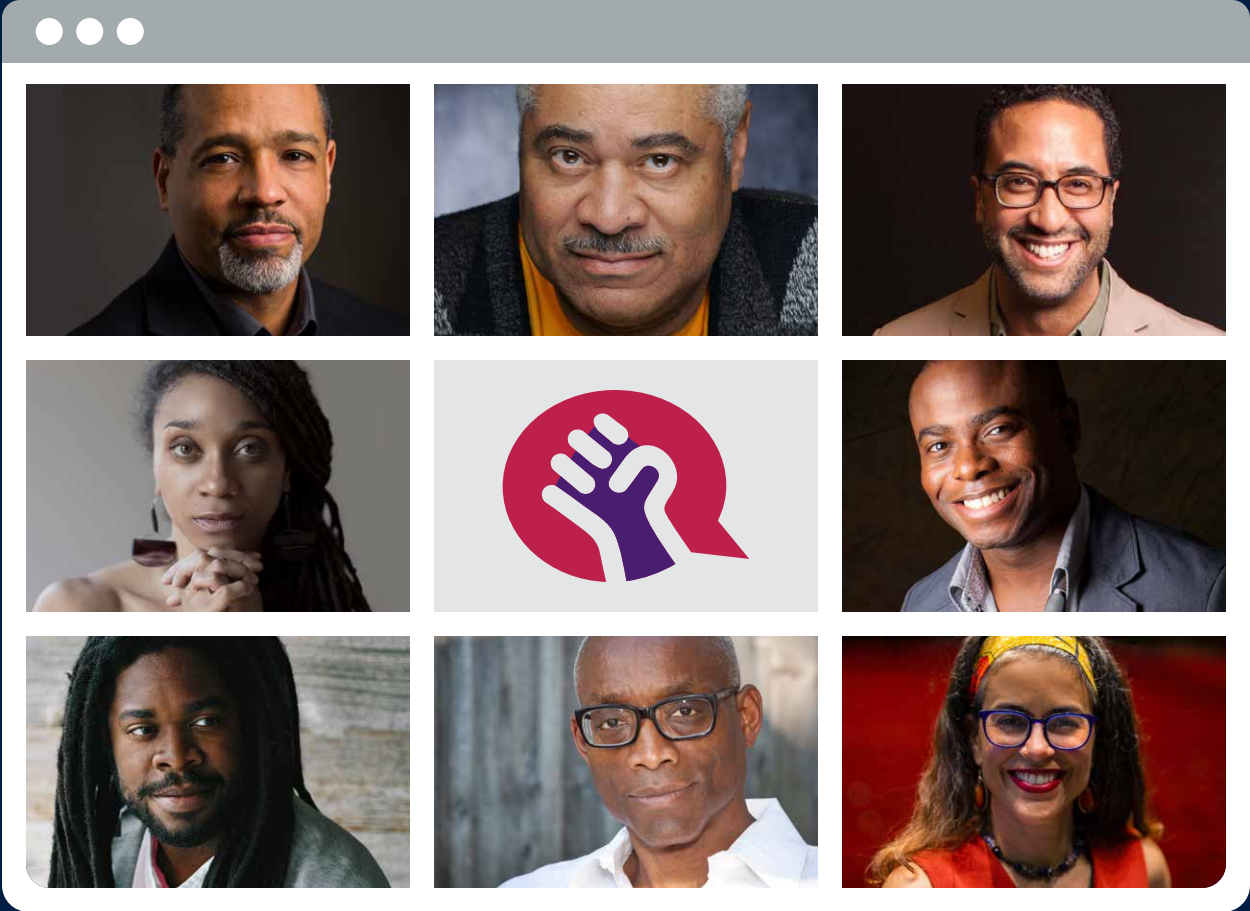
Roots of Life, a performing arts ensemble co-directed by Penn State Associate Professor of Theatre/Dance Kikora Franklin and Mount Nittany Middle School teacher Debra Daggs, explored the middle-and-high school students' hopes for their futures.

Students in a Penn State business ethics course, taught by Professor of Practice, Human Resources Management Tom Hogan, discussed the struggles and triumphs of building a life as an artist.

Improv in the Classroom, a new Penn State course developed in partnership with the Center for the Performing Arts and taught by Associate Professor of Education Andrea McCloskey, tackled the role of improvisational techniques in both music and life.

The festival capped its inaugural year with a virtual celebration of Juneteenth. Featuring several guests from *Meeting the Moment* conversations, Penn State faculty members, and artists who are a part of the Electric Root team, the event included spoken word performances, dance, and song.

Meeting the Moment photos (from top left): B. Stephen Carpenter II. Charles Dumas. C. Brian Williams. Samantha Speis by Hayim Heron. Anthony McGill by David Finlayson. Dashon Burton by Tautiana Daubek. Bill T. Jones by Christina Lane. Sita Frederick by Stephanie Swindle Thomas. Bottom: Mwenso and The Shakes by Oluwaseye Olusa.



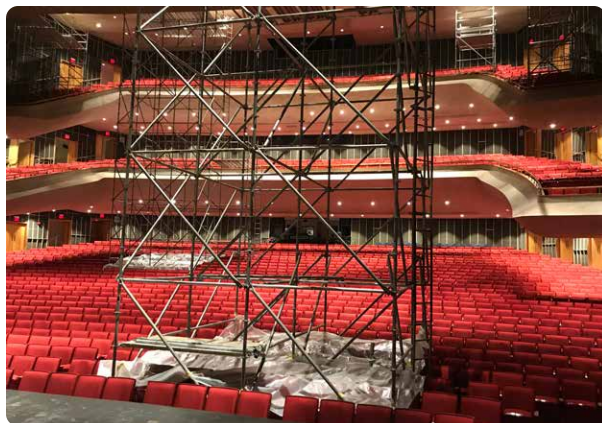
Facility renovations completed amid COVID-19

Renovations to Eisenhower Auditorium were scheduled to begin June 1, 2020, but the state-mandated shutdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic paused the project just as contracts to successful bidders were to be issued.

At that time, it was unclear whether the project would be allowed to take place. The effort that went into facilitating the project under unprecedented conditions was significant, and the fact that it was able to move forward is an acknowledgment of the venue's significance to Penn State.

The cancelation of events and in-person classes at the University in March 2020 actually allowed the renovation project to begin three weeks earlier than scheduled.

Most of the work was "behind the scenes," including mechanical system upgrades and emergency lighting modernization.



Improved accessibility for performers was achieved by converting an abandoned cooling tower and enclosure on the northwest corner of the building to an accessible "performer entry" to the dressing area and stage.

The auditorium roof was also replaced.

The improvement that patrons will notice is the replacement of all lighting fixtures in the audience chamber with LED fixtures and updated lighting controls. The new lights will cost less to operate. Plus, the new controls will give the theatre more flexibility by allowing specific areas in the seating area to be controlled independently.

Common in renovations of older facilities, some asbestos abatement was required for the project. Asbestos is only hazardous when airborne and, as always, precautions were taken during removal. All state and federal regulations were followed.

An additional positive to the abatement was that all finishes and fixtures in the areas affected had to be replaced, which provides a more welcoming feel in the spaces that serve artists during their time at Eisenhower.

The renovations had been scheduled for completion by early December 2020. But even with the earlier project start date, some supply chain delays shifted the completion to late January 2021.

The renovation is the result of a Facility Evaluation and Improvements Feasibility Study performed by Philadelphia's Voith and Mactavish Architects, LLP, in 2015. The firm was hired to undertake a comprehensive assessment and prioritization of the auditorium's maintenance and operational needs for a multi-phase improvement project.

Fire curtain and rigging replacement, as well as stage floor repairs, were previously completed.

Future phases will be required to meet ongoing deferred maintenance, capital renewal, and capital improvement needs. The total number and timing of future phases will be developed as required.

Renovations brought improvements to the exterior and interior of the building. Photos by Mark Tinik and Rick MacZura.



Eisenhower becomes classroom during pandemic

Center for the Performing Arts event staff members maintained their connection with Penn State students during spring semester 2021 by hosting classes in Eisenhower Auditorium. With the completion of the auditorium renovation project, the space was available for use. But with no in-person performances permitted, the venue became an ideal option for the Penn State School of Music's choral classes.

One of the conditions required to make singing safe was enhanced ventilation, specifically in terms of the number of times the air in a space is replaced by fresh, outside air. The Eisenhower stage is served by two air handling units that provide 1.2 complete air exchanges per hour. The seating area is equipped with three units that provide 7.4 air exchanges per hour.

Those calculations made it possible for each ensemble to use the stage for the first thirty minutes of a class period and the rear of the seating area for a second thirty-minute period. That was an advantage compared to the Music Building, where none of the spaces allow for occupancy longer than thirty minutes without having to vacate the room for half an hour.

Because singing is believed to increase the spread of coronavirus, the Eisenhower space made it possible for the students to maintain the nine feet of physical separation required even when wearing masks.

In addition to the choral classes, several hybrid courses took place in the venue. The hybrid scenario meant that a faculty member was physically in the auditorium along with some of the students, but other students participated via a virtual platform.

Center for the Performing Arts production staff members worked with classroom technology personnel to facilitate that option. A special technology lectern was delivered to the stage, which interfaced with a faculty member's computer, plus the in-house projector and audio system, to provide equivalent content delivery to the students in the venue and those elsewhere.

The hybrid courses included offerings in Art History, Materials Science, and Nursing.

A photograph of Eisenhower Auditorium's orchestra level, taken from above, shows how tape was used to block off sets of seats for social distancing when the facility was used for selected classes in spring semester 2021. Students also were seated in alternating rows.

Center finds innovative ways to connect with University students

The pandemic prompted the Center for the Performing Arts to employ innovative ways of thinking and doing in order to provide impactful arts experiences to Penn State students. Along with its partners, the Center for the Performing Arts Audience Development Department planned and delivered remote engagements to keep students connected to the arts.

In partnership with the Penn State Sustainability Institute, and as part of the IllumiNATION project, the Center for the Performing Arts hosted a virtual Sustainability Art Competition. Designed to be both fun and educational for students, the competition educated students and the University community about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals using creative expression and art as a conversational tool. All forms of art were accepted and three students out of fifteen applicants were chosen as the winners. View their pieces and the other submissions at <https://tinyurl.com/ry667nbb>.

Recognizing that many students suffered from screen fatigue, the Center for the Performing Arts created a *Deepening Engagement* document with four suggested activities to accompany its season of *Up Close and Virtual* performance presentations. One activity invited participants to draw or create in response to music and share the creation with the Center for the Performing Arts using the #ArtsEngagementPSU hashtag. Such activities allow the Center for the Performing Arts to connect with audience members after a performance. See the *Deepening Engagement* document at <https://tinyurl.com/3juaj8h3>.

Many people, particularly students new to Penn State, struggled to remain connected during COVID-19 restrictions. Seeking to build a sense of community and connection, Student Engagement

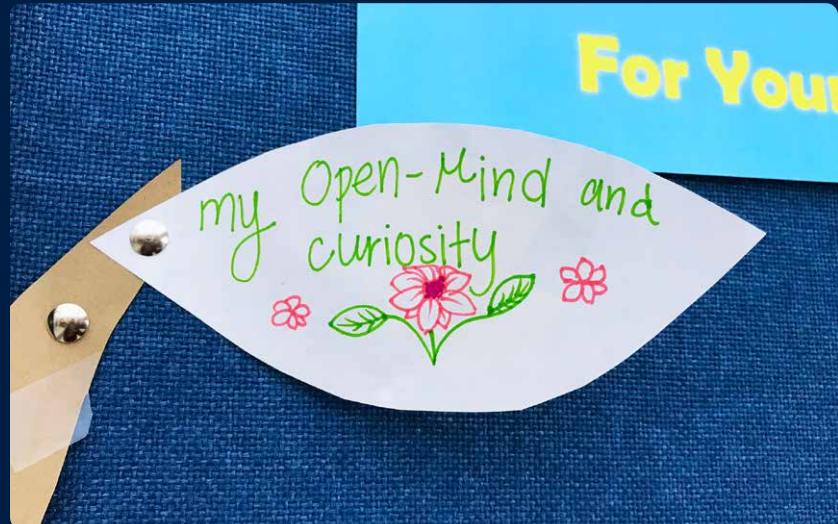
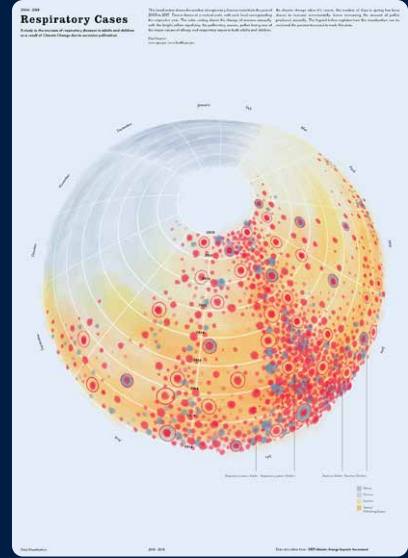
Manager Hope Falk partnered with Penn State's HUB-Robeson Galleries, Health Promotion and Wellness, and Student Engagement Programs, plus the College of Arts and Architecture's Arts and Design Research Incubator and Office of Digital Learning, to create community art boards.

Inspired by *The Anxiety Project*, created by School of Theatre Professor Bill Doan, the art boards provided an opportunity for reflection and expression. The Penn State community was invited to respond to prompts through drawing and/or written word. Through artistic expression, individuals can process and share experiences and perspectives, create a sense of community, connect with our common humanity, and cultivate the wellbeing of the larger campus community. Learn more about the project and see the online art board at <https://tinyurl.com/5j4ca54j>.

Building off the success of the community art boards, the same partners came together to offer virtual programming for Penn State's April Wellness Day. Students were introduced to mandalas and forest bathing as creative and sustainable self-care techniques in line with the wellness day's focus on physical and environmental wellness.

Printable mandala coloring sheets, online mandala activities, and information about what mandalas are were offered on the Mindful Making Self-Care Toolkit website under the "Mindful Art" tab. Information about forest bathing, as well as instructions on how to practice the activity at University Park, were offered under the "Mindful Movement" tab.

Falk and her intern built the website in partnership with the Health Promotion and Wellness office. The website, at <https://sites.psu.edu/mindful-making>, remains online as a resource to Penn State students.



Sustainability Art Competition submissions included a painting (upper left) by Gabrielle Henrichs, data visualization art (upper right) by Anjana Padmakumar, and bottle art by Montsy Olivas. The remaining images were among the art board creations.



Improv theatre class wraps inaugural Mellon-funded inter-domain course

The Reflection Project: Looking at Who WE ARE, the theme for a group of interdomain general-education courses sponsored by the Center for the Performing Arts and funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, concluded its inaugural semester with a live virtual Improv Showcase in May.

With pandemic safety in mind, Andrea McCloskey's spring 2021 course was offered as a hybrid, in which the twenty-three students attended class in a rotation via Zoom and in person at the Center for Pedagogy in Arts and Design Teaching Lab. The Penn State College of Education general-education course was open to all but was taken mostly by students not studying the performing arts.

"It's called 'Improv Theater, Curriculum and Instruction,'" so it's supposed to get us to reflect

on improvisation as a way of being in the world, communication, and then ourselves as learners — what is my style of learning," says McCloskey, an associate professor of education. "Because my background is in curriculum and instruction, I'm trying to make this a chance to reflect on how one would learn best in a university setting — what does it mean for me if I'm going to be a teacher?"

"... it's supposed to get us to reflect on improvisation as a way of being in the world, communication, and then ourselves as learners ..."

Andrea McCloskey

The core mission of *The Reflection Project* states that by engaging students with the arts, students

Above: Emlyn, a member of the Small Island Big Song collective of artists from Pacific and Indian ocean island nations, virtually visited Andrea McCloskey's spring 2021 classroom.

can more fully discover their identities, understand other points of view, be able to confidently tell their own and others' stories, and recognize how they fit into the world.

"When applying for the funding, we needed to reflect on the phrase 'We Are,'" McCloskey says. "So I wanted us to practice together what does it mean to be with different people and to also have a sense of community at the same time. It's kind of an experiment in that how can we use improv theatre to just get better at living together."

"... what does it mean to be with different people and to also have a sense of community at the same time."

Andrea McCloskey

The coursework featured virtual engagements related to programs scheduled for upcoming Center for the Performing Arts seasons, including artists from the Small Island Big Song collective and the stage works *Fandango for Butterflies (and Coyotes)* and *Cartography*.

"They represented artists in the world, and as an artist, you have to adapt," first-year student Cade Miller says. "They came to show us that the world is adapting. And kind of like improv — yes, and? — you just keep going with it no matter what you're given."

The center's call for proposals resulted in submissions representing an array of Penn State departments and programs. The selected proposals will be developed into Penn State general-education courses within two years.

"We are blown away by the creativity of Penn State faculty and the desire for them to connect to the arts," says Amy Dupain Vashaw, the center's audience and program development director. "As a brand new endeavor, we weren't sure what to expect. What we got were well-thought-out, meaningful, student-centered proposals from all corners of the University."

Other courses funded by the Mellon Foundation to be developed for fall 2021, or later, instruction

Climate Change and Storytelling

This nursing course, taught by College of Nursing Assistant Research Professor Erin Kitt-Lewis, will be aimed at linking climate change and its effects to health. It's being developed in conjunction with School of Theatre Professor Bill Doan.

Performance 360

Taught by College of Arts and Architecture Associate Professor Jeanmarie Higgins and College of the Liberal Arts Professor Jonathan Eburne, this course will ask students to reflect on the performing arts as a cultural and expressionistic practice and product for tourism.

Perspectives on Aging / Lighter as We Go

This College of Health and Human Development course, being created by Assistant Research Professor Amy Lorek, will encourage intergenerational interaction as a way to link lived experiences and humanity.

Creativity in the Art of Human Flourishing

Molly Countermine, associate teaching professor of human development and family studies, will develop and teach this course exploring the roles of aesthetic experience, the arts, and creativity in personal and collective flourishing.

Delfeayo Marsalis

Photo by Zac Smith



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Photo by Eduardo Patino



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We remember friends lost



Dotty Rigby

The Center for the Performing Arts commemorates the longtime friends and sponsors who passed away during the second half of 2020 and the first part of 2021.

Dotty Rigby died peacefully on July 15, 2020, of complications from cancer. Dotty and her husband, Paul, were longtime patrons of the arts in Centre County, including as sponsors for numerous classical music performances at the Center for the Performing Arts. They also supported many other local arts organizations, including the Nittany Valley Symphony, Centre Foundation, Penn’s Woods Music Festival, and Palmer Museum of Art.

The couple served on the center’s Community Advisory Council from 1994–2000. She again served on the council from 2008–2014.

In 2011, the Rigbys created The Dotty and Paul Rigby Classical Music Endowment at the Center for the Performing Arts. In 2013, the couple received the center’s Distinguished Service Award. He preceded her in death in 2017 after sixty-six years of marriage.

Together, the Rigbys were commission investors for Cirque Éloize’s *Saloon* and sponsored Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra—and, with Dotty’s friend Elinor “Ellie” Lewis, Russian National Orchestra. With Lewis, Dotty co-sponsored a number of events, including the National Symphony Orchestra of Cuba; Joshua Bell with Sam Haywood (with Lynn Sidehamer Brown and Kimberly Watkins); and *An Evening with Itzhak Perlman* (with Pieter W. and Lida Ouwehand).

“Dotty was a great friend whose passion for classical music was boundless,” says former center Director George Trudeau. “She will be greatly missed, but her legacy will live on through the Rigbys’ endowment at the center.”

Shirley Coploff

On January 14, 2021, Shirley Coploff, surrounded by her family, passed away at The Village at Penn State Atrium.

After raising their family in the central Pennsylvania communities of Lock Haven and Woolrich, Shirley and her husband, Max, enjoyed traveling. In 2012, they settled down at The Village at Penn State. According to his obituary, they chose State College “so they could enjoy the arts as much as possible in their retirement.” Together, they sponsored events at the Penn State School of Music. He preceded her in death in 2013.

As part of a collective sponsorship with Lam and Lina Hood and Nancy Gamble, Shirley co-sponsored three Center for the Performing Arts presentations—Tommy Igoe and the Birdland All-Stars, Balé Folclórico da Bahia, and Czech National Symphony Orchestra’s Leonard Bernstein tribute. With Gamble, she co-sponsored The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain.

“Shirley was a vibrant member and great supporter of the Center for the Performing Arts and Penn State community. She was a visible audience participant at almost every performance at the center, and her enthusiasm for each show was inspiring,” says Robyn Krause-Hale, director of Arts Advancement in Penn State’s College of Arts and Architecture. “We will miss Shirley’s fervor and presence in our audiences.”

Shirley is survived by her three sons Steven Coploff of Irvington, New York, Larry (Mary) Coploff of Lock Haven, and Jeffrey Coploff of Washington Depot, Connecticut. She is also survived by brother William Jaffe of State College and sister Elaine Altshuler of Philadelphia; nieces Marilynne (Alford) Bleeker and Robin (Chris) Goebel; nephew Matthew (Kelly Perez) Jaffe; and several great nieces and nephews.

A portrait of George Trudeau, a man with short white hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is dark.

Longtime Director

George Trudeau

**retires, leaving a
'well-positioned' center**

Center for the Performing Arts Director George Trudeau retired as 2020 came to a close.

"I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to serve Penn State and the communities we impact," he says.

Under his sixteen years of leadership, the organization elevated its national profile for programmatic excellence and leadership in the arts. The rise was driven by substantial increases in philanthropic support, partnerships across the University and central Pennsylvania, and an ever-expanding scope of artistic-academic relationships.

The decision to retire was not made lightly, Trudeau says, "but I do so knowing the center is well-positioned to continue to advance as a leader among university-based performing arts centers."



Itzhak Perlman, Emanuel Ax, and Yo-Yo Ma perform in March 2009. Photo by Andy Colwell.

The programmatic highpoint of his tenure, he says, was a 2009 performance by classical superstars Itzhak Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, and Emanuel Ax. Other highlights included week-long runs of the touring Broadway productions of *Jersey Boys* and *The Book of Mormon*; two Banjo Summit presentations headlined by master picker Béla Fleck; and sustained collaborations with artist organizations such as Jazz at Lincoln Center with Wynton Marsalis and academic partners such as Penn State's School of Music.

Trudeau used arts advocacy and purposeful arts engagement to encourage more young people to find meaning in performing arts experiences. One of his goals was to position the center as one of the top three reasons a student would choose to enroll at Penn State.

"He helped shape the center as an influential arts, culture, and education resource in Pennsylvania," says B. Stephen Carpenter II, dean of the College of Arts and Architecture.

Under Trudeau's direction, the center expanded its commissioning of new works and presented world premieres from artists including Cirque Éloize, Kronos Quartet, composer Maria Schneider, Step Afrika!, and Engarde Arts.

Major grants awarded to the center during Trudeau's tenure from the Doris Duke Charitable Trust and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation have supported multi-year innovative projects.

The Secret Life of Public Spaces was an eighteen-month collaboration among the center, Los Angeles-based Diavolo dance theatre, and Penn State's architecture, dance, engineering, and landscape architecture programs. The six-season *Classical Music Project* emphasized a salon-style experience with a focus on engaging Penn State students with visiting artists and presentations. During the 2019–2020 season, the center commenced *The Reflection Project: Looking at Who WE ARE*, which explores identity, community, and empathy through a "We Are" lens.

He also was the force behind major building and equipment improvements to Eisenhower Auditorium, including audio upgrades and accessible entry to the dressing rooms and stage.

In 2016, he led the launch of the center's Diversity and Inclusion Collaborative, which featured selected programming and residencies aimed at celebrating cultures, lifestyles, and historical contexts.

To commemorate his commitment to diversity in the arts, his colleagues established the George Trudeau Endowment for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The endowment will fund outreach and engagement programs in the region that foster conversation, acceptance, and inclusion of every community.

When he announced his retirement in January 2020, Trudeau had intended to step down in July 2020. The coronavirus pandemic, however, pushed his retirement date forward by six months. When the search for his successor was slowed due to safety concerns, he says, Dean Carpenter approached him about delaying his plans. He says he was happy to continue leading the staff until the end of the year.

"It was a very easy decision," he says. "We were making good progress. ... It was a great opportunity to continue working with such a great team, and I was pleased to be able to do so."

Today, Trudeau and his wife, Debbie, are enjoying retirement by spending time with their children and grandchildren, reconnecting with friends, and traveling the United States.

Income and Expenses

fiscal year 2020–2021 income

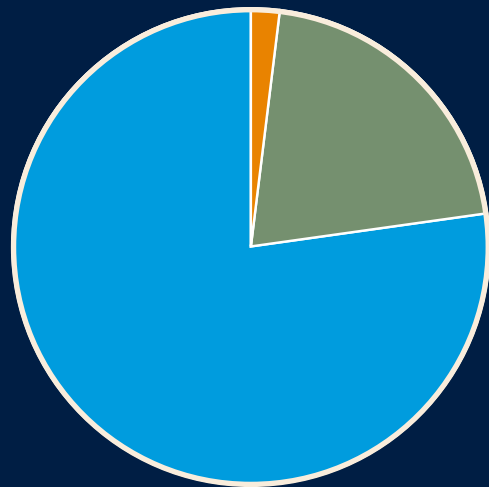
2% earned income

Ticket Sales <1%, Rentals 2%

21% development income

Contributions 10%, Grants 10%,
Endowment Support 1%

77% university support



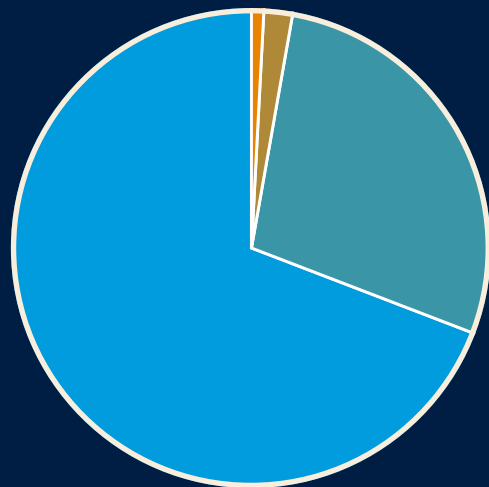
fiscal year 2020–2021 expenses

70% program and events

29% general and administrative

1% equipment and capital improvements

<1% development



The Center for the Performing Arts organizational budget totaled \$2,427,729. Thirteen percent of revenues were earned and contributed through tickets sales and services, facility and equipment rentals, fundraising, grants, and endowments.

Sita Frederick

joins center as new director



Photo by Marlon Ramos Photography

Sita Frederick, an arts administrator, educator, artistic director, and dancer with diverse experience leading creative and cultural initiatives at the national and local level, was named director of the Performing Arts at Penn State in early 2020. She succeeded George Trudeau, effective March 15, 2020.

Frederick says she anticipates challenges ahead, but she is ready to build on the center's history and successes to carve a niche for the organization.

"I look forward to developing a collaborative vision and strategy that resonates with our global and local communities and contributes to transformative change," she says.

Frederick served as director of community engagement from 2015–2020 at New York City's Lincoln Center, where she led a team that presented inclusive family arts programming on and beyond the Lincoln Center campus. She also launched mentorship and internship programs for young people and created an expansive residency program for community artists.

College of Arts and Architecture Dean B. Stephen Carpenter II says Frederick is integral in advancing the arts at Penn State.

"Her commitment to community engagement and the power of the arts in building healthy communities ties in perfectly with the center's mission of enriching people's lives and mobilizing the arts to help us relate to and better understand the world around us," he says.

In addition to dedicating her career to educational outreach, Frederick has danced professionally, including with Urban Bush Women, Arthur Aviles Typical Theater, and Merian Soto Performance Practice. In 2004, she and collaborator José Miguel Ortiz co-founded Areytos Performance Works. Their dance theatre company's focus was to create multidisciplinary community-based projects that explore themes of power, colonization, migration, race, gender, and culture.

Frederick, of Dominican and Canadian-American descent, has served as a mentor for Women of

Color in the Arts' Leadership through Mentorship program and as a board member of Word Up Community Bookstore in the Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights.

She holds a bachelor of arts degree in English and dance from Swarthmore College, Philadelphia, and a master of fine arts in new media art and performance from Long Island University, Brooklyn, New York.

Making connections

"Academic and scientific knowledge are built upon lived experience, but where we start is in our bodies and who we are in our minds and finding ways to really connect."

Acknowledging division

"There is a lot that's out there about what central Pennsylvania is, and I'm interested in getting underneath the labels and understand where people are coming from and what motivates people."

Program and they will come

Organizational loyalty is built "through inviting people to participate in what their interests are and showing up beyond our four walls; finding opportunities to collaborate with communities who are interested in engaging with us but haven't found the means to do it yet; trying some new programming and in terms of *where* we program; and trying some new messages about what we do and what we're about by building a vision that is participatory in nature and is informed by our communities."

Power in multiple perspectives

As a dance artist and educator, Sita Frederick brings a fresh energy and perspective to the position of director. The self-described risk-taker says she expects to encounter “wonderful challenges” in her mission to make the arts more accessible to all.

While she works to acquaint herself with the community, she wants everyone to know that the place she comes from is love.

“I would be considered radical for some folks, and there’s some radical ideas that have informed who I have become and who I am,” she says. “But I want to say that my values are centered in love for human dignity.”

Issues of belonging and inclusion that are important to Frederick have guided her artistic and career paths. In a June 2020 webisode of the center’s artist-to-artist series *Meeting the Moment with Michael Mwenso*, she says she continues to heal from the trauma “of not fitting in exactly.”

“That sense of neither here nor there, not fitting in quite anywhere is one of the reasons that belonging is so important to me,” she says. “This idea of holding space for people to be themselves, it’s what inspires me to be in this position.”

As community engagement programs director at Lincoln Center, she championed inclusive family programs, initiated mentorship initiatives for young people, and embraced community-based artists — all concepts she said she hopes to incorporate into the center’s mission.

Her vision for the center focuses on community effort and engagement — including sustained collaborative partnerships, broadened outreach, and purposeful programming — as the means to enhance a dedicated patron base.

Big challenges ahead

“To broaden or deepen the work that has already begun here is a wonderful challenge. So how do we more thoughtfully, more intentionally engage with students, with faculty, with staff, with community members, and so many different kinds of people?”

For whom are the arts?

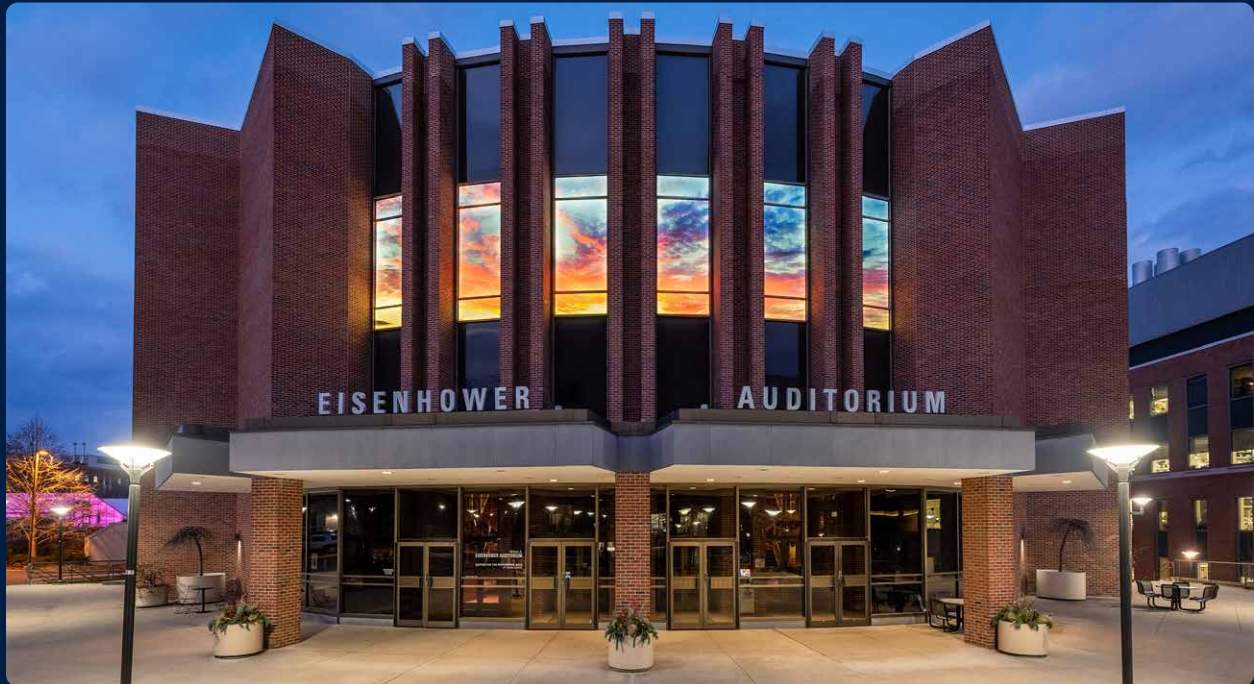
“There’s a lot of perception about what the arts are. In the past, the center has excelled at presenting certain types of arts, and I am excited about the challenge of broadening that.”

Celebrating traditions

“I deeply believe the arts can transform a child’s education (or a person’s) world view ... whether I want to carry on the family business and stay local — which is awesome — or whether I want to explore the world around me in new ways. In that way, the arts carry traditions, but also innovate and celebrate that tradition.”

One of the community builder’s first steps when she started was to hold a casual, virtual lunchtime talk with each of the center’s staff members. She hopes to cultivate partnerships and honor humanity, and she says she plans to hold conversations with community leaders, schools, and young people to learn their thoughts for the center’s path forward.

“We need to find how to celebrate our differences while also being able to celebrate our common ground — our humanity,” she says.



Extended Sunset installation gets eight-month extension

After rising in October 2019 in the face-fronting windows of Eisenhower Auditorium's upper level, Adam Frelin's popular installation *Extended Sunset* closed in June 2021.

Originally scheduled to be taken down in October 2020, the vibrant installation had an extended run because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The native Clearfield artist's dramatic rendering of a Pennsylvania sunset was one of eight commissioned art pieces installed at high-impact locations across Penn State campuses as part of the University's Campus Arts Initiative.

As part of Penn State's Strategic Planning Seed Grant program, Frelin worked with the Center for the Performing Arts to conceptualize, design, and install the site-specific work.

Photo by Amirmasoud Agharebparast

Extended Sunset featured a horizontal image of a Pennsylvania sunset installed into the six vertical windows at the front of Eisenhower. A timer controlled evenly spaced LED lights behind the colorful clings to illuminate the window in sync with each day's sunset and sunrise.

In a 2019 interview with the center, Frelin explains how growing up in central Pennsylvania influenced his choice of subject matter.

"I immediately remembered one of the things that was very hard about growing up in Pennsylvania was how overcast it was a lot of the time. It seems like such a minor thing, but it had such a huge impact on my happiness," he recalls. "So I started to think that maybe I'll make this piece for people like me. Maybe they just need something that is visually pleasing in a way that is a relief from some of the overcast-ness."

Frelin, an associate professor of art at the University at Albany, received a bachelor of fine arts degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a master of fine arts from the University of California San Diego. While he has been creating temporary outdoor public pieces for several years, *Extended Sunset* was his first window installation.

Painter Tiara Zhané conjures a troubled future in *An Adjustment*



Photo by Avery J. Belser

As a child in New York City, Tiara Zhané realized she possessed artistic talent.

"I knew I had it," she recalls. But when she said she wanted to attend a high school for the visual arts, her educators were dismissive.

"My teachers kind of mocked me in middle school because I didn't have a sketch book or a portfolio. I just had these pieces of paper in a manila envelope," she says.

"I wasn't really encouraged to pursue art just because of where I grew up in the south Bronx. You had to have the portfolios and the supplies, and I didn't really have access to that."

Zhané, who started at Penn State in 2012 in pursuit of a degree in human development and family studies, transcended the lack of support to become an artist on her own. One of her creations, *An Adjustment*, was part of an exhibition, *C/O Commonwealth*, at Penn State's HUB-Robeson Galleries Arts Alley in June and July 2021.

C/O Commonwealth — including sculptures, wall drawings, murals, and installations — was conceived in reaction to the five pillars of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership.

The Center for the Performing Arts commissioned the Zhané work, which includes four paintings (two pictured opposite) of personas the artist imagines living in the late twenty-first century. The figures appear against a stylized background of earth's continents and oceans. The acrylic-and-spackle paintings on wood, with attached paintings on cardboard, deal with the issues of immigration, climate change, mental health, and racial injustice.

"Our engagement staff discovered that the wonderful women of the HUB-Robeson Galleries (Lindsey Landfried, curator, and Sarah Kipp, exhibition coordinator), with whom we have collaborated on a number of projects, were seeking proposals for an artist collaboration for their summer exhibition. The themes of the exhibition really resonated with us and our work," says

Amy Dupain Vashaw, the center's audience and program development director.

"For the application, there were two options: either you'd already identified an artist with whom you'd like to work or the HUB Galleries staff would match the applicant with an artist. We fell into the latter category and were so excited to be paired with Tiara," Vashaw says. "After a few initial planning meetings to ensure both the center's vision and Tiara's ideas were in synch, we collaborated in earnest on the ideas you now see come to life in Art Alley."

Zhané's creation ponders what will happen if humans don't make changes to their ways of living.

"For me, *An Adjustment* (represents) the adjustments we're going to have to make as communities, as people, as individuals in order to survive what's coming in the future. ... Just seeing different ways we can adapt to the changes that are inevitably going to come," Zhané says.

"The themes for each of the personas tied into upcoming center presentations, themes such as climate change, inclusivity for folks who live with disabilities, elderly people who may be subject to feelings of isolation, and racism," Vashaw says. "Many of the presentations we select have social justice focused ideas at their heart, and this exhibition was a way to extend those ideas through the lens of a visual artist's eyes."

After two years at Penn State Hazelton, where she competed on the volleyball team, Zhané studied at University Park. But in 2016 she returned to New York City without having completed her degree. In 2019, she came back to State College determined to earn a diploma — she says she's about one semester's worth of courses shy of a bachelor's degree — and to pursue her art.

"I want to keep telling the story of the people," the painter says. "I got a lot of things in mind as far as how I want to share my story and how I want my story to impact others."



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• BELONGANCE •
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LOVE IS
L V E

LOVE WINS

HUMAN

LIVE OVER HATE
LOVE OVER INDIFFERENCE
LOVE OVER IGNORANCE
LOVE OVER FEAR
LOVE OVER BARRIERS
LOVE OVER BORDERS
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LOVE OVER
LOVE OVER

Staff shows true colors with Pride Ride participation

A team representing the Center for the Performing Arts drove a decorated "float" in State College's first Pride Ride.

The in-person Pride Month celebration on June 12 was organized by Centre LGBTQA Support Network and the borough. The community caravan and afterparty featured live music by Anchor & Arrow, a photo opportunity art installation by Leo Wang, a vehicle "float" decorating contest, and appearances by Lt. Gov. John Fetterman and state representatives Malcolm Kenyatta and Scott Conklin.

"It's really about celebrating those in our community and those that haven't been treated equitably in the past," says Douglas Shontz, Borough of State College communications specialist.

The parade started at State College Area High School and ended at Sidney Friedman Park.

Various businesses and supporters flew rainbow flags along the parade route, as a caravan of forty-plus vehicles displayed their pride by decorating their cars, trucks, scooters, and roller skates with rainbow-colored streamers, flags, banners, balloons, personalized signs, and magnets.

Center employees Len Codispot-Anderson, Sita Frederick, Kelly Kaiserian, and Jara Dorsey-Lash rode in a Jeep adorned with a hood banner and rainbow-themed flags and umbrellas.

"I had so much fun doing the electric slide with my colleagues for the first time," says Frederick, the center's new director. "Here's to more safe, in-person celebrating in our future. Happy pride, everyone."



Center for the Performing Arts staff members (opposite) Len Codispot-Anderson, Sita Frederick, Kelly Kaiserian, and Jara Dorsey-Lash pose with Pennsylvania Lt. Gov. John Fetterman at the Pride Ride starting point before motoring along the caravan route through State College. Photos by Cheri Jehu and Natalie Slane.

