

2018-19 IMPACT REPORT

:: DEBUT OF A NEW VISION

The Power of Penn Performing Arts



ANNENBERG
CENTER
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

“The Annenberg Center links the crucial skill of developing innovative thought with the educational mission of the University. It serves as a gateway—between artists and researchers, between artists and students, and between Penn and the city—and impacts a great number of people, both inside and outside the University.”

- ANDREW BROWNSTEIN, BOARD OF OVERSEERS

Dear Friend,

Creation. Integration. Inclusion. Transformation. These are the pillars of our current campaign, the Power of Penn Performing Arts, and together they represent our new vision for the Annenberg Center.

In the report that follows, you will see that our campaign priorities are threaded throughout all of our programming, from professional performances, to Penn student and alumni engagement, to our outreach to the Philadelphia community. The future of the performing arts at Penn is bold, inspiring, and dynamic, and our 2018–19 season was truly a showcase for the power of the arts to transform lives.

Sharing the performing arts beyond the walls of the Annenberg Center, we built deeper integration with both campus and city. We honored our legacy of presenting innovative theatre and diverse musical genres, and we set the foundation for contemporary dance to thrive at Penn long into the future. We widened the Annenberg doors, creating inclusive opportunities for Philadelphians young and old to experience the impact of the performing arts. And we reflected on current topics of immigration, race, and gender, using performance to share narratives, explore innovative ideas, and uncover what connects us all.

We are incredibly proud of what we have accomplished so far, which could not happen without your support. It is an honor to serve our mission, and I look forward to partnering with you to build our future as the center for innovative, inclusive, and impactful performing arts at Penn and in Philadelphia.

So, mark your calendar—this one, if you will!—and join us at the theatre to see our new vision come to life.

With gratitude,



Chris Gruits
Christopher A. Gruits

OUR MISSION

As the University of Pennsylvania’s home for the performing arts, the Annenberg Center connects diverse audiences with visionary artists and innovative ideas, engaging both the University and the greater Philadelphia community in transformative artistic experiences.

OUR VISION

The Annenberg Center is the University of Pennsylvania’s home for the performing arts, serving the campus through curricular and extra-curricular support, linking great artists, performances, and facilities to enhance and support the Penn experience.

The Annenberg Center is Philadelphia’s premier curator of innovative and groundbreaking programs, a presenter of sought-after artists, and a champion of arts education, partnerships and collaborations at Penn, in Philadelphia, and the mid-Atlantic region.

Vijay Iyer performed his Annenberg Center debut in the 2018–19 season.
Photo credit: Lena Adasheva

SEPTEMBER 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
					Tina Satter/ Half Straddle 7:00 PM	Tina Satter/ Half Straddle 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Tina Satter/ Half Straddle 7:00 PM				47SOUL 7:00 PM		Sweet Honey in the Rock 8:00 PM
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
				Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal 7:30 PM	Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal 8:00 PM	SUGAR SKULL! 1:00 PM Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

2018–19 In Review

40 premiere & debut performances

In September of 2018, the Annenberg Center launched its season with the U.S. premiere of Australia’s bold, contemporary circus troupe [Circa’s Humans](#), a tour de force about the power in physical and emotional strength. Renewing our profile as an innovative and inclusive presenter of groundbreaking work, *Humans* set a precedent for the upcoming season, which included over 40 premiere and debut performances and brought dozens of artists to Penn and Philadelphia that would otherwise not be seen in our region.

The 2018–19 season exemplified creative innovation, presenting cutting edge performances across music, dance, and theatre at locations beyond the Annenberg Center walls. Our expanded programming brought the performing arts to spaces throughout Philadelphia, including:

- A performance of *Two Pints* by [Abbey Theatre](#), at local pub The Blarney Stone.
- Grammy award-winning, Philadelphia-based chamber choir [The Crossing](#)’s performance of a world premiere at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Rittenhouse Square.
- [PA Ballet](#)’s *Prince Charming* at the Iron Gate Theatre as part of our Children’s Festival.

OCTOBER 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
						Hiromi 8:00 PM
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
					Stars of American Ballet 8:00 PM	Stars of American Ballet 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Jesse Cook 7:00 PM						
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
					Vox Luminis 7:30 PM	

2018-19 In Review

29 professional dance performances

The Annenberg Center’s long legacy of presenting contemporary dance is known throughout Philadelphia, and this past season was no exception. 2018-19 marked the welcome renewal of our partnership with NextMove Dance, the Annenberg Center’s programming collaborator for more than 32 years.

Together, we brought eleven remarkable ensembles featuring 120 dancers to Philadelphia, ranging from artist-in-residence Dance Theatre of Harlem, to the Philadelphia debut of up-and-coming Dance Heginbotham, to the return of Martha Graham Dance Company, a trailblazing and widely celebrated contemporary dance troupe.

This partnership between the Annenberg Center and NextMove Dance combines Philadelphia’s two major dance presenters under one roof, and creates the foundation to continue our tradition of bringing the best in dance to perform for Philadelphia audiences.



NOVEMBER 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
Vox Luminis 7:30 PM						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Messenger Legacy 8:00 PM						
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Joel Ross 7:30 PM						
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Kulu Mele African Dance & Drum Ensemble 8:00 PM						

2018–19 In Review

20+ musicians from 10 countries & 4 continents

In 2018, we launched a two-year programming arc entitled *The Philadelphians: Migrations that Made Our City*. Exploring how migrant populations past and present have shaped Philadelphia’s cultural landscape, *Migrations* presented eight performances probing the African American and European American experiences through music and song. Key performances included:

- Grammy Award winning conductor, composer, and author, [Jordi Savall](#) making his Philadelphia debut with *Routes of Slavery*. This singular production involved over 20 musicians from 10 countries on 4 continents. Charting musical traditions between 1444 and 1888, the program honored the influence of enslaved Africans on the culture of the Americas and Europe.
- The Philadelphia premiere of a newly commissioned work, *Vessels*, a seven-woman ritual performance and harmonic meditation on the Middle Passage. Using music and movement, the artists invoked their African ancestors and sustained their spiritual and cultural identity.
- London-based The English Concert in their Philadelphia debut, performing an opera-in-concert version of Handel’s *Semele* using Baroque period-instruments.

In keeping with the Benjamin Franklin/Philadelphia tradition, many of the *Migrations* performances included Junto-style discussion groups to build context for the performance and inspire dialogue around issues of migration, history, politics, the arts, culture, and identity.



DECEMBER 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Dianne Reeves 7:00 PM				PHILADANCO 7:30 PM	PHILADANCO 8:00 PM	PHILADANCO 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
					The Crossing @ Christmas 7:30 PM	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

2018-19 In Review

9,214
reached by our 2018-19
youth & family programs

More than 3,675 Philadelphia schoolchildren attended performances through our 2018-19 Student Discovery Series, the Annenberg Center’s core youth education program. Through school day matinees, we introduce area schoolchildren to the world-class artists who fill the Center’s regular season. For many attendees, a Student Discovery performance at the Annenberg is their first exposure to the professional performing arts.

We also deepened our inclusive youth programming by formalizing a partnership with Penn’s Netter Center for Community Partnerships, through which we serve nine University-assisted public schools in West Philadelphia. The 2018-19 season marked the first season during which the Annenberg Center provided nearly 600 students with subsidized tickets while the Netter Center sponsored bus transportation to and from the performances.

In total, our Student Discovery Series and Children’s Festival reached 9,214 school-aged children and their adults—a nearly 50% increase over the 2017-18 season.



JANUARY 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

We Shall Overcome
8:00 PM

Paul Taylor
Dance Company
2:00 PM & 8:00 PM

Paul Taylor
Dance Company
8:00 PM

Daedalus Quartet
7:30 PM

Dunedin Consort
7:00 PM

Spanish Harlem
Orchestra
8:00 PM

2018–19 In Review

13,643

University students
attended performances

We were delighted to welcome back the iconic Dance Theatre of Harlem as artist-in-residence for the 2018–19 season. Accompanying their performance schedule, the company hosted a master class for University students and two master classes for high school students. Additional master classes were conducted throughout the academic year by: Spectrum Dance Theater, Dance Theater of Harlem, Union Tanguera + Kate Weare Company, BODYTRAFFIC, and Parsons Dance.

Academic integration hit a high note when *Vessels* producers Rebecca Mwase and Ron Ragin visited the Penn History of Slavery Project seminar class as an element of our *Migrations* series. The artists’ participation enriched seminar curriculum through in-depth conversations around the history of slavery. Seminar students were then invited to attend the performance of *Vessels*, creating a bridge between classroom and stage.

The 2018–19 season also saw the establishment of the [Annenberg Student Advisory Council](#), which aims to support our Executive Director and artistic staff with feedback on curatorial programming of interest to Penn students, and to create a dialogue for how we can best support student groups and their goals for the performing arts on campus.



FEBRUARY 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
					Ephrat Asherie Dance 8:00 PM	Ephrat Asherie Dance 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
MUMMENSCHANZ 7:00 PM Alicia Olatuja 7:30 PM				Angélique Kidjo 7:30 PM	The Crossing 8:00 PM	The Crossing 8:00 PM
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
						The Philip Glass Ensemble 6:00 PM

2018–19 In Review

72

Penn student performances
across our 3 stages

The stages, rehearsal rooms, and lobby spaces of the Annenberg Center hummed with the activities of student performers, directors, stage managers and production crews in the 2018–19 season. Two dozen student productions were mounted across the Annenberg’s three stages, with cast and crew profiting from the expertise of our professional production staff. And Penn student workers more than doubled our professional staff, supporting the Annenberg Center across administrative offices.

Among student performances was Stimulus Children’s Theatre’s 30th anniversary celebration and world premiere performance of *The Prince and the Woogelefoof*, penned by a Penn Alumna playwright. Throughout the year, Penn student jazz ensembles offered pre-show performances for our professional jazz series. And in an effort to alleviate the growing challenge of available rehearsal space for over 25 dance ensembles across campus, we opened the Zellerbach stage and main lobby into the evening to support student groups.

2018–19 Student Group Performances at the Annenberg Center included: African American Arts Alliance, African Rhythms, Front Row Theatre, Penn 6-5000, Penn A Cappella Council (Showcase), Penn Glee Club, Penny Loafers, Penn Players, Penn Sori, Penn Singers, Penn Yo, Sargam, Soundworks Tap Factory, Sparks Dance Company, and Stimulus Children’s Theatre

Student a cappella group Counterparts entertained Penn alumni on their spring break tour.



MARCH 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
				Jenny Lin 7:30 PM		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
				The White Lama 7:30 PM		The White Lama 7:30 PM
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
				The White Lama 7:30 PM		Danú 8:00 PM
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
The Crossing 7:00 PM					Trinity Irish Dance Company 8:00 PM	Trinity Irish Dance Company 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
				Daedalus Quartet 8:00 PM		

2018-19 In Review

300+ Penn alumni reached

In concert with the Power of Penn campaign, Executive and Artistic Director, Christopher Gruits, took the show on the road, hosting events across the country, engaging alumni with the Annenberg’s bold vision for the future of the performing arts at Penn. Gatherings in Delray Beach, FL and Los Angeles, CA brought the performing arts off campus, featuring a faculty–student jazz trio and the student a cappella group Counterparts, respectively.

In March 2019, we were honored to host more than 100 Penn Alumni Board members for a reception and world-premiere performance by Dance Theatre of Harlem. This collaboration brought key alumni from across the country to the Annenberg Center, providing an opportunity to learn about our new vision for the performing arts at Penn.

Finally, our Director’s Advisory Council was launched in January 2019 as an initiative to engage alumni and friends working in the arts and entertainment industry. Council members support the mission of the Annenberg and serve in an advisory capacity to the Executive and Artistic Director, including providing counsel on curatorial programming, facilitating industry connections, and fostering opportunities for Penn students.



APRIL 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
						Daedalus Quartet 8:00 PM
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
SFJAZZ Collective 7:00 PM						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
				Pilobolus 7:30 PM	Pilobolus 8:00 PM	Sô Percussion 7:30 PM
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
						Les Violons du Roy 7:30 PM
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
					Lila Downs 8:00 PM	Jarana Beat 8:00 PM

2018-19 In Review

\$25K+

raised in FY19 to support the Penn Performing Arts Initiative

Established in 2016, the Penn Performing Arts Initiative (PPAI) creates opportunities for Penn alumni who are passionate about the arts to connect back to the University in a meaningful way, and to support Penn’s robust performing arts community. With leadership and support from a growing regional council of volunteers, in FY19 the Penn Performing Arts Initiative:

- Funded the acquisition of a new portable acoustical shell, allowing students and professional musicians and singers to expand and enhance their performances at Penn.
- Hosted a vibrant outreach event in New York: *Hip-Hop Holidays: Celebrating Dance & Artistic Mash-up*, featuring a conversation between Dr. Timothy Rommen, Chair of Penn’s Department of Music, and Jennifer Weber C’00, director-choreographer of the international touring hit *The Hip Hop Nutcracker*, as well as a performance by *Strictly Funk*, the student dance group that Weber founded during her time at Penn.
- Supported the Penn Student A Cappella Concert, *Raise Your Voice*, which raised funds to benefit the Philadelphia branch of the National Alliance of Mental Illness.

PPAI is a collaboration between the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, the Platt Student Performing Arts House, and Theatre Arts Program and Department of Music of the School of Arts and Sciences.

MAY 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
					Lila Downs 8:00 PM	Jarana Beat 8:00 PM
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
				Philadelphia Children's Festival		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
					Tania Pérez-Salas Compañía de Danza 8:00 PM	Tania Pérez-Salas Compañía de Danza 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

2018-19 In Review

3,437
subsidized tickets provided
to area schoolchildren

As the country's oldest festival of its kind, the 34th year of our three-day Philadelphia Children's Festival saw record turnout, welcoming upwards of 5,550 children and their adults and growing the attendance rate by over 30% compared to last year.

Prioritizing the inclusion of those who may not typically have access to the professional performing arts, the Festival attracts local families alongside classes from public, private, and parochial schools. This year, attendees were treated to inspiring performances including *Air Play*, *Moona Luna*, Pennsylvania Ballet's *Prince Charming*, Trusty Sidekick Theater Company's *Shadow Play*, *Smirk*, and a workshop with *Pilobolus@Play*.

For an added layer to the festival experience, we partner with regional arts organizations to offer hands-on, interactive art projects on our outdoor plaza. 2019's Festival included dynamic activities with the Arden Theatre Company, Pennsylvania Ballet, The Clay Studio, Fabric Workshop and Museum, Fleisher Arts Memorial, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Koresh Dance Company.

JUNE 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
				MOMIX 7:30 PM	MOMIX 8:00 PM	MOMIX 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4

2018–19 In Review

802
performing arts enthusiasts
attended *Insights* events

The Annenberg Center serves as the institutional bridge between the University and our surrounding community, and we have a strong commitment to looking outward and engaging diverse audiences. One pillar of this commitment is our [West Philly Rush](#) program, which provides deeply discounted tickets to residents of West Philadelphia. Subsidized tickets for community residents significantly improve access to the Annenberg’s programming for the over 290,000 residents who fall into the seven zip codes that form the West and Southwest Philadelphia neighborhoods surrounding the University.

We strive to include and engage our audiences in dialogue around the performances presented during our season through [Insights](#) programming events that bring Penn’s academic resources to bear on artistic forms and social issues. [Insights](#) events offer a deeper and richer context for the Annenberg’s professional performance series through post-show discussions that frequently feature Penn faculty and genre-experts.

FY19 *Insights* programming included *Spectrum Dance Theater*, *Jordi Savall*, *Jessica Lang Dance*, *Caleb Teicher Dance*, *Martha Graham Dance Company*, *Union Tanguera + Kate Weare Company*, *The English Concert*, *BODYTRAFFIC*, and *Parson’s Dance*.



JULY 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

2018-19 In Review

151
guest events

As a major university arts presenter, we are proud to open our state of the art theaters to partner with local organizations, community groups, artists, and performances like *Potted Potter: a 70-minute Harry Potter parody* that brought 6,300 patrons through our doors over five days—91% of whom were first-time Annenberg patrons.

We welcomed many other regional arts, culture, and education groups to the Annenberg Center in the 2018-19 season, including:

- Philadelphia Folklore Project
- Royal Society of Arts' *Benjamin Franklin Award Ceremony*
- *Philadelphia Magazine's ThinkFest*
- The Rock School for Dance Education
- Philadelphia Department of Parks & Rec *Young Performers Theater Camp*
- Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia *Arts and Business Council Awards 2019*
- Shakespeare in the Park

In addition to regional organizations, the University of Pennsylvania is the Annenberg Center's most consistent guest, making up over 50% of our overall guest event activity, including Wharton, The President's Office, The Vet School, Stuart Weitzman School of Design, Development and Alumni Relations, and the Sachs Program for Arts Innovation.

Local high school students participate in a masterclass with Dance Theatre of Harlem as part of the company's residency.

107K
total patrons served

425
dancers, musicians,
singers & actors

63
performances in
the Annenberg
Presents season

AUGUST 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

2018-19 In Review
38
UPenn student workers

5,550
Children's Festival
attendees

1,291
seats in 3 theatres

115+
hours of student
rehearsal time

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In memory of our faithful friends who have recently departed. The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts & the University of Pennsylvania have been strengthened through your service and support. We are grateful for your lives and the legacy you have left behind.



Michael Kuritzkes, Esq. L’85

Corporate Lawyer

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*This list recognizes gifts received between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019.
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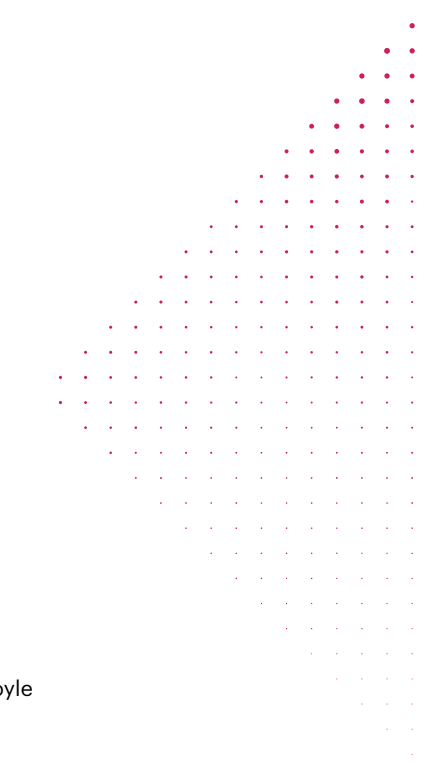
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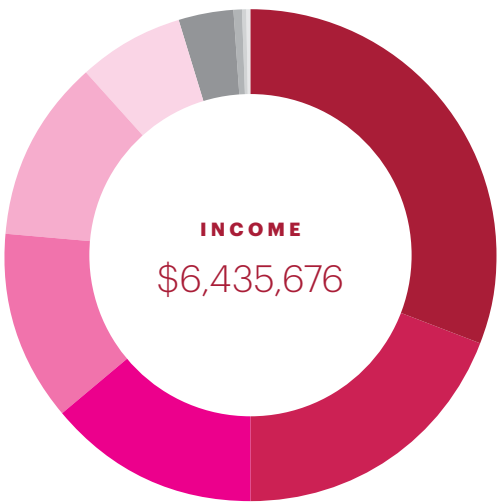
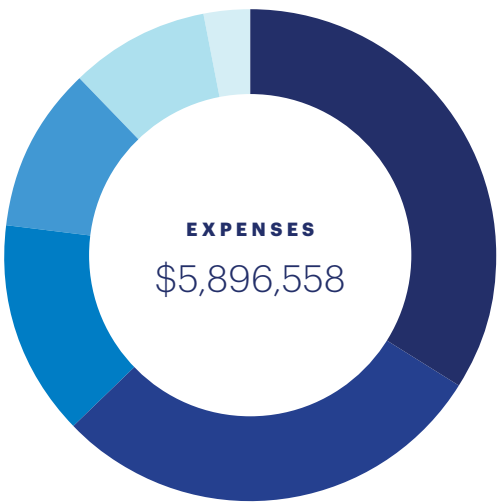
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Creation.
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Inclusion.
Transformation.

Our vision for the performing arts at Penn is of the creation of new, innovative work, deeper integration with students, faculty and programs across the University, inclusion of diverse audiences, artists, and the broader community, and the transformation of our physical space to serve collaborative creation and appreciation of the performing arts.

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Cover photo: Seth Bloom and
Christina Gelsone perform *Air Play*
at the 34th Annual Philadelphia
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