

Penn Live Arts 2022-23 Season | Celebrating 50 Years

50th Anniversary Season includes

Negro Ensemble Company (NEC) Residency

Rennie Harris Puremovement Residency

Alice & John: A Coltrane Festival

ListenHear Composers Series

Accelerator Program

10 Dance Presentations

***Jazz, world music, early music, theatre, family fun and holiday presentations
complete Penn Live Arts' 2022-23 season***

(Philadelphia – May 6, 2022) — [Penn Live Arts](#) has announced its [2022-23](#) season, curated by **Executive and Artistic Director Christopher A. Gruits**, and celebrating 50 years of exceptional, multi-disciplinary performing arts at the University of Pennsylvania. Subscriptions are on sale now at [PennLiveArts.org](#) or 215.898.3900. Single tickets will go on sale in early August.

Penn Live Arts Presents the 2022-23 Season

Penn Live Arts celebrates its 50th anniversary in the 2022-23 season, a delayed observance of its April 1971 opening, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Annenberg Center opened as a gift to both Penn and Philadelphia, aiming to promote innovation in the performing arts, and in the 50 years since it has championed icons and rising stars, amplified diverse voices, and illuminated adventuresome perspectives on the world. Thousands of artists have enlivened its stages and millions of people have been transformed by the power of live performance. In 2022-23 Penn Live Arts presents a season befitting this major milestone, with 38 world and local premieres, three commissioned works, and 12 artists appearing in Philadelphia for the very first time. The season includes major residencies with the [Negro Ensemble Company](#) and [Rennie Harris Puremovement](#); a two-week festival honoring the music of [Alice and John Coltrane](#); [ListenHear](#), a new composer series; the inaugural season of the Penn Live Arts [Accelerator Program](#), 10 dance companies; and jazz, world music, early music, hybrid digital performances, and a cirque series for audiences of all ages. It is a season well worth the wait!

“We are thrilled to announce our 50th anniversary season,” said **Penn Live Arts Executive and Artistic Director Christopher A. Gruits**. “Penn Live Arts has always been an important curator of innovative and experimental programs for Penn and for the Philadelphia region, and we have long invested in diverse artists and storytelling. These guiding principles are our legacy and we are proud to carry them on in our 2022-23 season. I’d like to thank the many new and longtime partners we’ll be working with who are helping to make this important season especially rich and robust. As we celebrate during the coming season, we welcome all to join

us in looking back to honor our past and at the same time looking forward, as we create our next 50 years and beyond.”

The Negro Ensemble Company (NEC) Residency

The residency between [Penn Live Arts and the Negro Ensemble Company \(NEC\)](#) brings together one of the most important Black theatre producers in the United States and the University of Pennsylvania’s nexus of the performing arts, two legacy organizations that share a mission of advancing innovative, contemporary theatre. The goal of the yearlong residency is to reflect authentic, underrepresented stories of the Black experience and elevate meaningful and thought-provoking conversations on the monumental role of Black artists in shaping art and culture in our country. Spanning the 2022-23 season/academic year, the residency will encompass a one-act play festival in the fall and the world premiere of a new multidisciplinary theatre work in the spring. Additionally, the residency will include collaborative community activities with NEC artists and Penn students and faculty, notably Penn Professor of English and Africana Studies **Herman Beavers**, who teaches (with instructor Suzana Berger) the arts-based community service course entitled, "August Wilson and Beyond."

Our Voices, Our Time: One-Act Play Festival (October 8) Our Voices, Our Time seeks to amplify and celebrate Black voices, stories and perspectives. Selected from a worldwide pool of submitted scripts, three plays will be produced and receive their world premieres in Philadelphia before going on to New York. [A new play](#), directed by five-time NAACP best directing award-winner **Denise Dowse** and with designer **Patrice Andrew Davidson**, juxtaposing protest poetry of the Civil Rights Movement with the social justice movement of today, will receive its world premiere in February 2023. **(February 15-18)** This new work merges live music, dance, civil rights era poetry and contemporary writings that reflect on our nation’s recent racial reckoning, with additional inspiration from Ntozake Shange’s acclaimed theatre piece, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow is Enuf*.

Alice & John: A Coltrane Festival

Alice & John: A Coltrane Festival explores the immense impact Alice and John Coltrane had on American music, with an exciting emphasis on Alice’s significant and often underrepresented contributions. With rising star saxophonist **Lakecia Benjamin** serving as Artistic Advisor, the festival showcases John’s bebop, free jazz and spiritual enlightenments alongside the more abstract sounds and Eastern influences of Alice’s compositions. A prolific star of the dance world, choreographer **Pam Tanowitz’** company performs a world premiere commissioned work set to Alice’s music and played live by [Lakecia Benjamin and her band, Pursuance](#). **(October 14-15)** Benjamin and Pursuance remain in the spotlight with an all-Coltrane inspired program featuring a Penn Live Arts commissioned piece and special guests, including vocalist **Dee Dee Bridgewater** and two musicians who played with the Coltranes themselves, **Gary Bartz** and Philadelphia-native **Reggie Workman**. **(October 16)** [Ravi Coltrane](#) brings a personal connection in a grand exploration of his parents’ musical legacy **(October 22)**, and jazz harpist [Brandee Younger](#) continues her years-long dedication to Alice’s music, highlighting her earlier works. **(October 23)** Films and discussions with Coltrane scholars round out the thematic journey with these jazz icons.

Rennie Harris Puremovement Residency

Philadelphia’s legendary hip hop choreographer, **Rennie Harris**, finds a home base in this 22-23 season residency. With technical support from our Accelerator Program, Harris’ Puremovement will re-mount his most celebrated work, [Rome & Jewels](#), a hip-hop-meets-Shakespeare journey through the streets of Philadelphia, kicking off a tour in celebration of the company’s 30th anniversary. Beyond the debut of this groundbreaking

production, the residency will include co-curricular events on campus, a school-day matinee and outreach with West Philadelphia schools. **(December 9-10)**

ListenHear Composer Series

ListenHear, a new series for Penn Live Arts, profiles significant contemporary musical voices, illuminating composers, many connected with Penn's renowned composition program, who are creating new work across the musical spectrum. The 2022-23 season features Argentine classical composer [Oswaldo Golijov](#), who studied at Penn himself **(November 6)**; prolific jazz, film and opera composer and six-time Grammy® Award-winner [Terence Blanchard](#) **(November 12)**; Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and vocalist [Caroline Shaw with Sō Percussion](#) **(February 3)**; and multiple Grammy® Award-winning jazz icon [Arturo O'Farrill and the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra](#) **(April 13)**. These Philadelphia premiere performances will be enhanced by pre-show talks to further connections to the artists and their music.

Dance

Ten dance companies help Penn Live Arts mark its momentous 50th anniversary, featuring some of the world's greatest companies and most extraordinary choreographers, world and local premieres, commissioned works and live music. The series puts a wide array of styles centerstage, from contemporary and ballet to hip hop and tap, including [Pilobolus](#) **(October 7-8)**; [Pam Tanowitz Dance](#) **(October 14-15)**; [Ballet Hispánico](#) **(November 4-5)**; [Rennie Harris Puremovement](#) **(December 9-10)**; [Arno Schuitemaker](#) **(January 13-14)**; [Dance Theatre of Harlem](#) **(January 20-21)**; [Martha Graham Dance Company](#) **(February 10-11)**; [Paul Taylor Dance Company](#) **(April 21-22)**; [Nrityagram Dance Ensemble & Chitrasena Dance Company](#) **(May 5-6)**; and *SWING OUT* with [Caleb Teicher](#) **(June 9-10)**.

Accelerator Program

During its five decades of innovative artistic programming, Penn Live Arts has brought countless world premiere performances to Philadelphia, supporting and presenting new work across dance, music and theatre. The Penn Live Arts Accelerator Program formalizes this significant investment in artists and their futures with resources to help finish and bring works to the stage. The inaugural Accelerator Program artists are [the Negro Ensemble Company](#) **(October 8 and February 15-18)**, [Pam Tanowitz Dance](#) **(October 14-15)**, [Rennie Harris Puremovement](#) **(December 9-10)**, [The Crossing](#) **(December 16 and March 24)**, and [Dance Theatre of Harlem](#) **(January 20-21)**.

Season Opener

Penn Live Arts kicks off its 50th anniversary celebration with a [Community Open House](#) **(September 16-17)** featuring a second line procession across campus and performance (ticketed) by the **New Breed Brass Band** from New Orleans, **Penn Band Slam**, **Pilobolus Safari** (reservations required), storyteller **Charlotte Blake Alston**, and official **National Dance Day** celebration, all leading up to the season's opening night with the Penn Live Arts debut of gospel legends the [Blind Boys of Alabama](#) (paid, ticketed).

Music

In the 2022-23 season Penn Live Arts also presents jazz artists [Ulysses Owens Jr. & Generation Y](#) **(February 25)**, [Theo Bleckmann: Berlin: Songs of Love and War, Peace and Exile](#) **(March 11)**, and [Craig Taborn](#) **(June 2)**; music from diverse cultures and periods with [Kardemimmit](#) **(September 30)**, [Soweto Gospel Choir](#) **(November 18)**, [VOCES8](#) **(February 9)**, [The Crossing with the PRISM Quartet](#) **(March 24)**, and [George Hinchliffe's Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain](#) **(May 7)**; and holiday presentations [The Rodney Marsalis Philadelphia Big Brass](#) **(December 11)** and [The Crossing at Christmas](#) **(December 16)**. Continuing its

growing focus on early music, Penn Live Arts also presents [The Songs of Solomon | The Music of Salamone Rossi](#) (October 27), [Benjamin Bagley's Beowulf](#) (January 27), and [Tabea Debus](#), recorder (March 2).

Cirque/Family Programming

[Machine de Cirque: La Galerie](#) (October 2); [Acrobuffos: Air Play](#) (January 29), and [FLIP Fabrique: Muse](#) (March 25) will transfix audiences with breathtaking feats and flights of fancy.

World Cafe Live Partnership

Penn Live Arts and World Cafe Live team up once again to co-present three fantastic performances: [Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn](#) (October 30), [Anaïs Mitchell](#) (March 3), and [Julianna Barwick](#) (May 19).

The 2022-23 season also includes the Philadelphia debut of the Italian theatre company [Teatro delle Albe](#) with the **United States premiere** of *fedeli d'Amore (Love's Faithful)* **January 20-21**), a digital hybrid series of performances that accommodate both remote and in-person audiences, and the continuation of film series that complement performance programming.

Celebrating 50 Years

The first multi-disciplinary performing arts center in Philadelphia, Penn Live Arts (Annenberg Center) has long been an artistic crossroads joining the University of Pennsylvania and the greater Philadelphia region. Over its 50 years it has introduced Philadelphia audiences to artists and innovative programming through world-class music, dance, theatre and film on campus and at venues throughout the city. Penn Live Arts presents one of the premier contemporary dance series in the country and its extensive history of commissioning and championing artists has fostered important creative work by theatre legend Hal Prince, new music composers Philip Glass and Steve Reich, boundary-pushing choreographers Paul Taylor, David Parsons and Moses Pendleton, jazz greats Hugh Masekela, Terrence Blanchard and Branford Marsalis, and many more. For younger audiences, Penn Live Arts' Student Discovery series offers weekday matinees and the annual Philadelphia Children's Festival, established in 1985 as the first event of its kind in the nation, serves children and families in the region with a range of interactive arts experiences.

About Penn Live Arts

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

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