



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR RELEASE:**  
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# **Society for the Performing Arts reveals its new name as Performing Arts Houston, unveils a bold new look, announces a new season of live arts, launches a new membership program, and opens applications for the second annual Houston Artist Commissioning Project**

**(Houston)** —Continuing a 55-plus year history of presenting diverse live arts programming and arts education in Houston, SPA rebrands as **Performing Arts Houston** and announces its **22/23 Season** of nationally and internationally renowned touring artists and performers. Applications are now open for **New/Now: The Houston Artist Commissioning Project**, an initiative that spotlights artists' voices in our own community through commissioning new works. Focusing on audience engagement and access, a new membership program will be launched today. Information on all programs goes live on our new website, [performingartshouston.org](http://performingartshouston.org), on April 12, 2022.

### **SPA becomes Performing Arts Houston**

The new name, Performing Arts Houston, better reflects the organization's mission and vision. It also captures the depth and breadth of our performances, arts education, and community engagement programs. Dropping the word "Society" from our name reflects our value of welcoming all Houstonians to participate in the performing arts.

"We have a strong 55-year legacy of providing high quality artistic programming and arts education to the city of Houston. We're thrilled to carry this mission into a second half century with a new name and look,"

says Performing Arts Houston CEO Meg Booth. “It also lets us lose the acronym, SPA. As therapeutic as the arts are, we’re happy not to be confused in google searches with spa treatments.”

### **Announcing the 22/23 Season**

Performing Arts Houston presents touring artists from around the globe, from every genre. Announced today, the 22/23 Season offers over two-dozen programs with leading musicians and music groups, speakers and comedians, contemporary and classical dance, and large theatrical productions. Additional artists will be announced as national tours take shape throughout the course of the year. Tickets are on sale to members now, with public on-sales beginning on July 12. More at [performingartshouston.org](http://performingartshouston.org).

Dance highlights of the 22/23 Season include **Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan**, the premier contemporary dance company in Taiwan; **Ragamala Dance Company**, a classical Indian Bharatnatyam company led by mother-daughter team Ranees Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy; **Dance Theatre of Harlem**, a New York City institution that performs both classical ballet and contemporary dance; and Gregory Maqoma’s **Vuyani Dance Theatre** from South Africa, performing *CION: Requiem of Ravel’s Bolero*.

The new season features a huge range of music performances, from jazz and gospel to mariachi and classical styles. **Preservation Hall Jazz Band**, New Orleans icons that Performing Arts Houston has presented since 1971, will celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with us this season. Grammy Award-winning gospel titans **The Blind Boys of Alabama** will perform a Christmas show with *The Voice* finalist and Houston’s own Sarah Grace & The Soul. Chicago-based multi-Latin Grammy nominee **Mariachi Herencia de México** will make their Houston debut with special guest **Lupita Infante**, herself a multi-Latin Grammy nominee. Continuing a tradition that goes back 50 years, Performing Arts Houston will present the Gold Medalist of the **Van Cliburn International Piano Competition**, to be held in Fort Worth, Texas in June. Acclaimed London-based classical choir **Tenebrae**, one of the premier vocal ensembles in the world, makes its Houston debut. **Mnozil Brass**, known as “the Monty Python of the music world,” will perform *GOLD*, the greatest hits of their 25-year career. Classical violinist **Randall Goosby**, a protégé of Itzhak Perlman and recent recipient of a 2022 Avery Fisher Career Grant, makes his Houston debut with music of Beethoven and more. Grammy Award winners **Third Coast Percussion** return with music by Philip Glass, in a collaboration with street dance collective **Movement Art Is**. Jazz phenom **Matthew Whitaker**, the featured artist of Performing Arts Houston’s 2021 virtual gala and 2016 winner Showtime at the Apollo, makes his live Houston debut.

Family programming includes many large-scale productions. An *America’s Got Talent* favorite, **DIABOLO** will perform *Trajectoire* and a new work honoring veterans. Cirque du Soleil’s **Cirque Dreams Holiday**, is an experience that blends musical theater, holiday classics, and circus arts. **Mutts Gone Nuts!**, one of Performing Arts Houston’s all-time bestselling programs, is a family comedy act with astoundingly talented canines. **Gazillion Bubble Show**, an off-Broadway success for over 15 years, will have Jones Hall overflowing with bubbles of all shapes and sizes. **Our Planet Live in Concert**, a reimagining of the acclaimed Netflix documentary series, featuring a live orchestra, takes audiences on an immersive tour of the wonders of planet Earth. Houston favorite, **STOMP** returns with evening performances and a student matinee.

Our speaker series offers three Performing Arts Houston debuts: YouTube success, **My Name is NOT Mom**, featuring social media stars Meredith Masony, Tiffany Jenkins, and Dena Blizzard, explores the realities (and hilarity) of motherhood. Twenty-year veteran stand-up comedian, actor, writer, and podcast host **Tom Papa** brings his *Family Reunion Tour* to Houston. He’ll also be selling copies of his latest book, *You’re Doing Great*, in the lobby. British cook, TV host, and writer **Nigella Lawson**, whose bestselling cookbooks have sold over 12-million copies worldwide, makes her Houston debut.

See more on the 22/23 Season below, including a complete schedule and more details about each artist.

### **Education & Community Engagement Extended Programming**

Throughout the season we'll announce arts education opportunities on our website and social media channels. Programs include Westwood Trust Creative Chats, a student matinee performance of *STOMP*, open rehearsals, and H-E-B Performance Preludes—a series that celebrates local student and community performing arts groups through showcases in the lobby connecting them to a wider audience.

### **Applications Open for *New/Now: The Houston Artist Commissioning Project***

Performing Arts Houston launched *New/Now: The Houston Artist Commissioning Project* in 2020, with the goal to amplify Houston's artists' voices through commissions for the creation of new works across all performing arts disciplines.

"Now, more than ever, it's critical for performing arts organizations to create connections within their communities," Performing Arts Houston CEO Meg Booth shared. "*New/Now* celebrates the extraordinary talent and rich diversity of artists working and living in Houston and creates opportunity for our hometown artists to perform and be seen in the Theater District. The program also accelerates artistic innovation within Houston."

Inaugural *New/Now* performances in the fall of 2021 culminated in six world premieres on-stage at Jones Hall. For many, including Mayor Sylvester Turner, the variety of Houston artists presented on one of the city's most iconic stages, was significant. "In Houston, we are highly diverse, but every day we are seeking to be inclusive, and we are doing it right here," Mayor Turner shared.

During the 22/23 Season, Performing Arts Houston will build on the momentum of the project's pilot year, featuring up to four world premieres at the Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, on February 24-25, 2023. Winners of 2022 *New/Now* commissions will each receive a \$6,000 cash award, creation of marketing assets, and a full presentation of two performances of their new work in Houston's Theater District. *New/Now* artists will also participate in engagement programs throughout the season, including virtual talks, a panel-discussion with other winning artists, a program on-site at one of Performing Arts Houston's education & community partners, and an open rehearsal for Houston area students.

**Applications for awards are open until midnight on Friday, May 20, 2022.** The organization welcomes project proposals for new 20–25-minute works from artists and artist groups working in the Greater Houston Metro Area. Details and applications at [performingartshouston.org/newnow](https://performingartshouston.org/newnow).

### **Memberships**

With the start of the 22/23 season, Performing Arts Houston is launching a new membership program. Starting at \$25, members enjoy first access to best seats for upcoming performances, ticket discounts, invitations to exclusive events, and more.

"Our audiences want greater flexibility with their tickets, an easier way to support the arts and arts education they value, and behind-the-scenes experiences," shared Performing Arts Houston's Director of Development Jordan Drum. "Memberships provide greater value for our supporters, ease of access, and a more meaningful relationship with our organization, all while directly supporting Performing Arts Houston and our impactful programs."

Memberships are on sale now. More at [performingartshouston.org/memberships](https://performingartshouston.org/memberships).

## 22/23 Season Schedule of Performances

Performance	Date/s	Venue
<b>My Name is NOT Mom</b>	September 9 & 10, 2022	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b>Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan: <i>13 Tongues</i></b>	October 1, 2022	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b>Tom Papa: Family Reunion Tour</b>	October 7, 2022	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b>DIABOLO</b>	October 14-15, 2022	Jones Hall
<b><i>Cuando México Canta: Mariachi Herencia de México with Lupita Infante</i></b>	October 16, 2022	Jones Hall
<b>2022 Cliburn Gold Medalist</b>	October 18, 2022	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b>Mutts Gone Nuts!</b>	October 23, 2022	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b>Tenebrae: <i>The Passing of the Year</i></b>	November 13, 2022	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b>Matthew Whitaker</b>	November 18, 2022	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b>An Evening with Nigella Lawson</b>	November 27, 2022	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b>The Blind Boys of Alabama Christmas Show</b>	December 4, 2022	Jones Hall
<b>Cirque Dreams Holiday</b>	December 23-24, 2022	Jones Hall
<b>Gazillion Bubble Show</b>	January 28, 2023	Jones Hall
<b>Dance Theatre of Harlem</b>	February 3-4, 2023	Jones Hall
<b>NEW/NOW: The Houston Artist Commissioning Project</b>	February 24-25, 2023	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b>Mnozil Brass: Gold</b>	February 26, 2023	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b>Ragamala Dance Company: <i>The Fires of Varanasi</i></b>	March 10, 2023	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b>Preservation Hall Jazz Band: <i>60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration</i></b>	March 14, 2023	Jones Hall
<b>Randall Goosby</b>	March 15, 2023	Zilkha Hall, The Hobby Center
<b>Our Planet Live in Concert</b>	March 22, 2023	Jones Hall
<b>STOMP</b>	March 23-26, 2023	Jones Hall
<b>Gregory Maqoma's Vuyani Dance Theatre: <i>Cion: Requiem of Ravel's Boléro</i></b>	April 21, 2021	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center
<b><i>Metamorphosis: Third Coast Percussion</i></b>	May 5, 2023	Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

## 22/23 Season Performances in Detail

### **My Name is NOT Mom**

Sep 9 & 10

Friday & Saturday

7:30 pm

Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

*My Name is NOT Mom* is a YouTube success featuring social media stars Meredith Masony, who has over 4 million followers on all platforms, Tiffany Jenkins, with over 12 million followers on all platforms, and Dena Blizzard, whose Facebook LIVE show *One Funny Morning* has over 25k viewers daily. The comedy trio reflect on motherhood through stand-up, stories, videos from their online community, and audience interaction.

### **Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan: 13 Tongues**

Saturday, October 1, 2022

7:30 pm

Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan is the premier contemporary dance company of Taiwan. Cloud Gate Artistic Director CHENG Tsung-lung's *13 Tongues* is a dance work that evokes memories and legends of CHENG's childhood in Bangka/Wanhua, the oldest district of Taipei. Presented in partnership with Asia Society Texas and Taiwan Academy-Houston.

### **Tom Papa: Family Reunion Tour**

October 7, 2022

7:30 pm

Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

With more than 20 years as a stand-up comedian, Tom Papa is one of the top comedic voices in the country, finding success as an author, in film, TV, radio and podcasts, as well as on the live stage. Tom has four hour-long stand-up specials, including *Tom Papa: You're Doing Great!*, a wildly successful Netflix Original. Mr. Papa was also a longtime writer of 20/21 artist Chris Thile's *Live From Here* radio program. The performance features a post-show book signing.

### **DIAVOLO**

October 14-15, 2022

Friday & Saturday

7:30 pm

Jones Hall

Seen by over 95 million people as a Top 10 Finalist on NBC's *America's Got Talent*, DIAVOLO's mission is to "explore the relationship between the human body and its surrounding architectural environment." Led by Artistic Director Jacques Heim, the Los Angeles-based company returns to Houston with two works: *S.O.S.*, a new piece in service to U.S. military veterans, and *Trajectoire*, an experience built around a 3,000-pound boat made of wood, aluminum, and steel.

### **Cuando México Canta: Mariachi Herencia de Mexico with Lupita Infante**

Sunday, October 16, 2022

6:30 pm

Jones Hall

Mariachi Herencia de México, a Chicago-based Latin Grammy-nominated group of young Mexican American musicians, perform a vibrant tribute to the golden age of Mexican music. Joined by multi-Latin Grammy nominee Lupita Infante, granddaughter of icon Pedro Infante, Mariachi Herencia de México and Infante honor the legacy they inherited.

**2022 Cliburn Gold Medalist**

Tuesday, October 18, 2022

7:30 pm

Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

Held every four years in Fort Worth, Texas, the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition is widely considered one of the preeminent music contests in the world. Having presented winners of The Cliburn for over 50 years, including exceptional artists Yekwon Sunwoo and Joyce Yang, Performing Arts Houston welcomes the Gold Medalist of the 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the piano competition, to be announced in June. *Sponsored in part by Texas Commission for the Arts.*

**Mutts Gone Nuts!**

Sunday, October 23, 2022

1 pm & 4:30 pm

Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

One of Performing Arts Houston's best-selling programs, Mutts Gone Nuts! is a comedy dog show created by comedy duo Scott and Joan Houghton, featuring a unique blend of physical comedy and circus arts, and dogs adopted from animal shelters or rescue groups, all trained with positive, reward-based methods.

**Tenebrae: *The Passing of the Year***

Sunday, November 13, 2022

6:30 pm

Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

The Tenebrae Choir is a London-based professional vocal ensemble founded and directed by former King's Singer Nigel Short. They're one of the world's leading vocal ensembles, receiving nominations for Grammy Awards, BBC Music Awards and Gramophone Awards. Known for their popular culture work as well, Tenebrae performed "So Long, and Thanks for all the Fish" in the film adaptation of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, as well as music on the soundtrack of Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men*. The choir's Houston debut features repertoire from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

**Matthew Whitaker**

Friday, November 18, 2022

7:30 pm

Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

Matthew Whitaker's talent has been recognized from an early age. At 9, he taught himself to play the Hammond B3 organ. Four years later, he became the youngest artist to be endorsed by Hammond in its 80+ year history. He won FOX's *ShowTime at the Apollo* in 2016 at age 15 and won two Herb Albert Young Jazz Composers Awards for his own original music. Matthew was the featured artist of Performing Arts Houston's 2021 virtual gala. This this will be his Houston live debut.

**An Evening with Nigella Lawson**

Sunday, November 27, 2022

6:30 pm  
Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

Nigella Lawson is an internationally renowned food writer and cook whose successful television programs have made her a household name around the world. Her first TV series, *Nigella Bites* aired in 2000, followed by a string of successful series, including ABC's *The Taste* with Anthony Bourdain. She has twelve best-selling books to her name, including her latest, *Cook, Eat, Repeat: Ingredients, Recipes, and Stories*. Her books have sold over 12 million copies worldwide. Pre-signed books will be available for sale in the lobby.

### **The Blind Boys of Alabama Christmas Show**

Sunday, December 4, 2022

6:30 pm  
Jones Hall

The Blind Boys of Alabama are recognized worldwide as living legends of gospel music. Celebrated by The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) with Lifetime Achievement Awards, inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, and winners of five Grammy Awards, they have attained the highest levels of achievement in a career that spans over 70 years. The Blind Boys' performance will be joined by Sarah Grace & The Soul. A Houston native, Sarah Grace made the semi-final round of NBC's *The Voice*, in 2018.

### **Cirque Dreams Holiday**

December 23-24, 2022

Friday, 3 pm & 7 pm

Saturday, 11 pm and 3 pm

Jones Hall

Cirque du Soleil's *Cirque Dreams Holiday* is a holiday experience for all ages, merging Broadway-style musical theater with circus art, and featuring over thirty acclaimed singers and acrobats from 12 different countries.

### **Gazillion Bubble Show**

January 28, 2023

Saturday, 11 pm & 3 pm

Jones Hall

Featured on Amazon Primes' *Mozart in the Jungle*, Gazillion Bubble Show has been a New York City off-Broadway success for over 15 years. Creator and Producer Fan Yang, who holds 12 Guinness World Records for bubble arts, and his family—wife Ana, son Deni, daughter Melody, and brother Jano—all perform bubble magic on stage in New York and around the world. Over 100 bubble machines will fill Jones Hall with bubble magic. An event for all ages.

### **Dance Theatre of Harlem**

February 3-4, 2023

Friday, 7:30 pm; Saturday, 2:00 pm

Jones Hall

Now a singular presence in the ballet world, celebrating its 50th Anniversary, the Dance Theatre of Harlem Company tours nationally and internationally, presenting a powerful vision for ballet in the 21st century. The 17-member, multi-ethnic company performs a forward-thinking repertoire that includes treasured classics, neoclassical works by George Balanchine and resident choreographer Robert

Garland, as well as innovative contemporary works that use the language of ballet to celebrate African American culture. Through performances, community engagement and arts education, the Company carries forward Dance Theatre of Harlem's message of empowerment through the arts for all.

Based in Harlem, New York City, the company was founded in 1969 under the co-directorship of Arthur Mitchell and Karel Shook. These will be the company's first Houston performances in nine years.

### **New/Now: The Houston Artist Commissioning Project**

February 24-25, 2023

Friday & Saturday, 7:30 pm

Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

Launched by Performing Arts Houston in 2020, New/Now celebrates and uplifts Houston's working artists. Now in its second year, Performing Arts Houston is building on the momentum of the success of the initiative's pilot year, with expanded artist awards and performances in the intimate setting of the Wortham Center's Cullen Theater. Audiences will be the first to see world premieres by up to four commissions winners, to be announced later this year. Details and applications at [performingartshouston.org/newnow](http://performingartshouston.org/newnow).

### **Mnozil Brass: Gold**

Sunday, February 26, 2023

6:30 pm

Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

The Mnozil Brass are an Austrian brass septet known as "the Monty Python of the music world," giving performances that combine slapstick humor with virtuosic brass playing. The group formed while the players were students at the Vienna College of Music and took their name after the pub where they first played. "Gold" highlights the most popular works of their 25-year career.

### **Ragamala Dance Company**

Friday, March 10, 2023

7:30 pm

Cullen Theater

#### *Fires of Varanasi: Dance of the Eternal Pilgrim*

Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy Artistic Directors

*The Fires of Varanasi* is a large-scale, multidisciplinary dance work in which the choreographers (Ranee, Aparna & Ashwini Ramaswamy—mother and daughter) explore the liminal spaces in the birth-death-rebirth continuum to understand human experiences of migration—physical, cultural, emotional. French light/set designer/art director Willy Cessa has created a multi-sensory experience that weaves together choreography, nature, and ritual. New Delhi-based visual artist Manav Gupta has designed a large-scale stage installation, transforming thousands of Indian earthen vessels into an homage to the swirling waters of the Ganges.

### **Preservation Hall Jazz Band: 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

7:30 pm

Jones Hall



Founded in 1961 by Allan Jaffee but officially named in 1963, Preservation Hall Jazz Band will celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with special performances in 2023. The iconic group continues and furthers the rich jazz traditions of New Orleans.

**Randall Goosby**

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

7:30 pm

Zilkha Hall, The Hobby Center

Signed exclusively to Decca Classics in 2020 at the age of 24, American violinist Randall Goosby is acclaimed for the sensitivity and intensity of his musicianship. A protégé of legendary violinist Itzhak Perlman, Goosby has performed with orchestras across the U.S., including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Cleveland Orchestra. Goosby was recently named a recipient of a \$25k 2022 Avery Fisher Career Grant. His Houston debut features works by William Grant Still, Beethoven, and more.

**Our Planet Live in Concert**

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

7:30 pm

Jones Hall

The landmark Emmy-nominated Netflix documentary series *Our Planet* has been reimaged into an immersive film experience with live orchestra. Specially developed by the series producers, World Wildlife Foundation, Silverback Films and Oscar®-winning composer Steven Price, *Our Planet Live in Concert* is narrated on screen by legendary broadcaster David Attenborough.

**STOMP**

March 23-26, 2023

Thursday, 7:30 pm

Friday, 7:30 pm

Saturday, 2 pm & 7:30 pm

Sunday, 1 pm

Jones Hall

Created in Brighton, England in 1991, STOMP is a percussion performance that uses a variety of everyday objects as percussion instruments —Matchboxes, brooms, garbage cans, Zippo lighters and more. For decades, Houston has been one of the best-selling cities on STOMP's national tour. Their 2023 return will include a student matinee performance of the full 90-minute show.

**Gregory Maqoma's Vuyani Dance Theatre:**

***Cion: Requiem of Ravel's Boléro***

Friday, April 21, 2021

7:30 pm

Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

Led by choreographer Gregory Maqoma, South Africa's Vuyani Dance Theatre makes its Houston debut with a full work that draws inspiration from the character Toloki in South African author Zakes Mda's novel *Cion*, and music from French composer Maurice Ravel's *Boléro*.

**Metamorphosis: Third Coast Percussion**

Featuring choreography by Movement Art Is (Lil Buck and Jon Boogz)

Friday, May 5, 2023

7:30 pm  
Cullen Theater, Wortham Center

Third Coast Percussion joins forces with the groundbreaking choreography of Movement Art Is for an intimate, evening-length program that explores the duality of human nature. Two disparate styles of street dance blend seamlessly with new music by Jlin and Tyondai Braxton, as well as Third Coast Percussion's critically acclaimed arrangements of Philip Glass's *Aguas da Amazonia*.

**Performing Arts Houston's 22/23 Season Sponsors**

H-E-B

Le Méridien Hotel Houston Downtown

City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance

**Health & Safety**

Covid-related protocols will be assessed as the 22/23 Season approaches. All health & safety policies are at the discretion of the artist, venue, and presenter and subject to change.

**About Performing Arts Houston**

For over 55 years, Performing Arts Houston has connected audiences with exceptional artists through diverse performances and learning experiences throughout Houston communities and schools. We welcome all to ignite and cultivate passion for the performing arts and explore the vast landscape of artistic expression to discover new understanding about ourselves, create community, inspire dialogue, and enrich our world. More at [performingartshouston.org](http://performingartshouston.org).

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