Dear Friends,

The 2017-2018 Season was one to remember, not only because of the disruption and impact of Hurricane Harvey, but also because of the incredible resilience and sense of community demonstrated by the people of this region. The overwhelming support that Society for the Performing Arts received following the storm was tremendous, and we want to extend our most sincere thanks to the dozens of individuals and local, state, and national institutions who gave their resources toward our organization’s recovery.

Society for the Performing Arts exists for the people of our region, and despite last season’s challenges, our organization found a way to deliver the transformative and healing power of the arts when our community needed it most.

Thank you to all of our loyal subscribers, dedicated sponsors, faithful supporters, and generous friends who helped make the 2017-2018 Season a reality and whose love for the arts ensures that Society for the Performing Arts can continue serving our community well into the future.

Leslie Nelson
Interim CEO & Chief Financial Officer

Theresa Einhorn
Chair, Board of Directors
The mission of Society for the Performing Arts is to enrich the cultural life of Houston by presenting the world’s best performing artists and enlightening and educating youth and others in the joys of the performing arts.
Variety

Since its inception, variety has been a hallmark of Society for the Performing Arts’ programming. Each season’s artist offerings span several genres, including dance, music, visual art, theater, literature, and multi-disciplinary performing arts.

Society for the Performing Arts’ 2017-2018 Season included 33 main stage performances by 21 artists and touring companies as well as over 80 education and community engagement programs.

SPA presented these performances at four venues across Houston, including Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, Zilkha Hall at the Hobby Center, Warehouse Live, and the Cullen Performance Hall at the University of Houston, with outreach programs taking place at dozens of locations all over the greater Houston area.

21 artists and companies

33 mainstage performances

4 theater venues

80+ education & community engagement activities
Partnerships

As a presenting organization, Society for the Performing Arts depends on its partners, including touring artists from around the country and the world, to deliver programming that meets the needs of Houston’s audiences.

Local and national partners at universities, community centers, schools, other local non-profits, and touring artists were a crucial part of Society for the Performing Arts’ 2017-2018 Season. With the help of longtime national partner Ballet Hispánico and local partners the HUB Houston, Episcopal High School, and the University of Houston, SPA successfully delivered this year’s sensory-friendly matinee (even though flooding forced the cancellation of the originally scheduled date), as well as the annual Ballet Hispánico Summer Dance Intensive.

“THE PART THAT GIVES ME THE MOST JOY IS BEING ABLE TO GO TO HOUSTON, MY HOMETOWN, EVERY YEAR WITH BALLET HISPÁNICO AND SHARE THE EXPERIENCES I’VE LEARNED WITH KIDS WHO ARE TAKING A SIMILAR PATH.” - SHELBY COLONA, BALLET HISPÁNICO DANCER AND HOUSTON NATIVE
Affordable access to the performing arts is essential to Society for the Performing Arts’ mission. In keeping with that goal, ticket prices and event registration fees remained low during the 2017-2018 Season. Additionally, SPA offered hundreds of free tickets to Houston-area service organizations and non-profits, especially those most affected by Hurricane Harvey, through the CAST (“Collecting All Surplus Tickets”) program.

Affordable access also means making the expertise of our touring artists available to Houston-area residents. Through master classes, lectures, and meet-and-greets, audiences interacted with several touring artists. Students from Yellowstone Academy had the opportunity to meet the inspirational Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson backstage before his Jones Hall performance while others interacted with artists like Ira Glass and dancers from Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and the National Dance Company of Spain.

27 touring artist-led lectures and master classes

906 free tickets distributed to mainstage presentations
Quality

Society for the Performing Arts is committed to providing the highest quality programming both on stage and in the community.

The 2017-2018 Season included community activities by several individuals and companies at the top of their field, including soprano Renée Fleming, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and host of NPR’s This American Life, Ira Glass.

In November 2017, four lucky vocal students at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take a master class with Renée Fleming. Many touring artists spend a large part of their time in Houston delivering similar activities each and every SPA season.
Flooding in the Theater District caused damage at Jones Hall, where SPA programs the majority of its main stage performances. SPA’s offices, located beneath Jones Hall, also sustained damage, forcing the organization to temporarily relocate. However, the most significant flooding damage in the district was to the Wortham Theater Center, the planned location for approximately 40% of SPA’s 2017-2018 Season presentations, dozens of education and community engagement activities, and SPA’s largest annual fundraiser.

The demand for venues outside the Theater District for displaced arts organizations forced the cancellation or postponement of several programs. Despite these challenges, SPA was able to find suitable alternative venues for many activities. After all, no matter the circumstances, “The show must go on!”

Society for the Performing Arts, like so many individuals and organizations in Houston, was significantly affected by Hurricane Harvey. The success of the 2017-2018 Season is a testament to the dedication and resiliency of our organization and its supporters.
Storytellers:
The 20th Annual Wells Fargo Student Art Contest

The 20th Annual Wells Fargo Student Art Contest theme, “Storytellers,” encouraged students to tell their personal story through their submission. A record-breaking 718 students submitted their artwork created with a variety of mediums, which visually depicted narratives including family immigration stories, the loss of loved ones, and other salient moments in their lives.

The strength of every Wells Fargo Annual Art Contest is the theme which students can interpret in a variety of ways. While the “Storytellers” theme was selected well in advance of Hurricane Harvey, many students chose to depict their experience during the storm. The work was cathartic for students, giving them a chance to process the traumatic episode while creating highly personal pieces of art.

“EVACUATION WAS DIFFICULT AND HARD TO DEAL WITH, AND THIS IS THE REASON I CREATED THIS PIECE OF ART.”

-JACOREY DAVIS, 7TH GRADE

718 individual entries
106 participating schools
59 individual awards
Society for the Performing Arts wishes to recognize and thank the sponsors, supporters, and donors whose generous contributions made the 2017-2018 Season a reality.

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revenue
44% contributed
56% earned
7% hurricane relief*
13% corporations
25% foundations*
25% special events
14% individuals
11% government

expenses
74% programming
13% development
13% administrative

contributions
*does not include gifts from the SPA Foundation
2017-2018 Season Performances

Tango Buenos Aires
Jones Hall
November 3, 2017

Renée Fleming
Jones Hall
November 4, 2017

David Sedaris
Jones Hall
November 6, 2017

A Wynonna & The Big Noise Christmas
Jones Hall
December 7, 2017

2Cellos
Jones Hall
January 17, 2018

Kinky Boots
Jones Hall
January 19-21, 2018

Piano Battle
Zilkha Hall at The Hobby Center
January 28, 2018

Nufonia Must Fall
Jones Hall
February 9, 2018

The Illusionists Present: Adam Trent
Jones Hall
February 10, 2018

GlobalFest
Warehouse Live Ballroom
March 3, 2018

Compañía Nacional de Danza: Carmen
Jones Hall
March 10, 2018

Bria Skonberg
Jones Hall
March 23, 2018

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago
Jones Hall
April 13, 2018

Tao: Drum Heart
Jones Hall
April 14, 2018

Feathers of Fire: A Persian Epic
Cullen Performance Hall
University of Houston
April 20, 2018

The Sound of Music
Jones Hall
June 1-3, 2018

Penn & Teller
Jones Hall
June 8, 2018