



SOCIETY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
Bringing the World's Best to Houston

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOCIETY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS LAUNCHES COMMISSIONING PROJECT FOR HOUSTON ARTISTS

HOUSTON (JULY 17, 2020) – Society for the Performing Arts (SPA) announces a new commissioning project for Houston artists, *SPA Houston Artist Commissioning Project* (HACP). SPA's goal is to promote and sustain Houston's working artists and artist communities by supporting the creation of new works across all performing arts disciplines. In this pilot year, the project will progress through two phases: an initial period of virtual commissions, followed by larger-scale live performance commissions presented in Jones Hall for the Performing Arts. By supporting local artists directly, awarding financial resources for newly created works, *SPA Houston Artist Commissioning Project* will give our city's performing artists an opportunity, and funding, to move their creativity forward.

“Artists are essential to social, cultural and economic growth,” says Meg Booth, SPA’s CEO. “Although the pandemic has decimated artists' livelihoods, creativity is sustainable and will thrive if supported. Our goal is to support local artists, fuel the creative pipeline and create opportunity for local performing artists to be presented in Houston’s Theater District.”

SPA believes the artist’s voice can lead to greater understanding of ourselves and each other, challenging us, inspiring dialogue, and suggesting new possibilities. Through the lens of current events, making a path for creative expression and experimentation is essential.

Houston is the most culturally diverse city in the nation. In celebrating artists’ voices here at home, we promote more connected and thriving communities. SPA believes Black artists, Indigenous artists, artists of color, artists in the LGBTQ+ community, artists with disabilities, and woman artists must be centered through this project. To that end, we strongly encourage applications from artists with these identities or members of other marginalized communities.

SPA Houston Artist Commissioning Project Award Details

In the inaugural pilot year, two types of commissions will be offered:

Virtual Commissions

Six awards will be given to working performing artists or groups within the Greater Houston Metro Area to create a new 3-5 minute virtual work. These new works will premiere on SPA's social and digital platforms in fall 2020.

Virtual Commissions include:

- \$800 Artist Award
- One virtual *SPA Creative Chat* about their project, moderated by SPA's Director of Education, to be shared on SPA social media channels prior to premiere of the new work

Applications for virtual awards are due August 21, 2020, with winners announced September 14, 2020.

Live Performance Commissions

Three awards will be given to working performing artists or groups within the Greater Houston Metro Area, to create a new 15-25 minute work to premiere in festival format on the Jones Hall stage in summer 2021. **Participants in virtual commissions will not be excluded from consideration for live performance awards.**

Live Commissions include:

- \$5,000 Artist Award
- Technical support prior to the performance to assist in development of lighting, sound, and/or set concepts for the new work
- On-stage performance presentation at Jones Hall for the Performing Arts with other live performance awardees
- On-stage rehearsal time prior to the performance

Additionally, live performance commissions will include SPA-hosted opportunities to engage with the public:

- One virtual *SPA Creative Chat* moderated by SPA's Director of Education about the artists involved in the project and the concept of the work to be created, to be shared on SPA social media channels during spring 2021
- One *SPA Behind the Curtain* conversation moderated by SPA's CEO about the creation process, in-person and/or shared on SPA social media channels during spring 2021.
- One preview/talk-back with students from a Houston-area school, in-person or online, during spring 2021

Applications for the Live Performance awards due December 18, 2020. Winners will be announced January 29, 2021. Awardees will have through Summer 2021 for creative

development. Live performance dates to be announced.

How to Apply

Applications available at spahouston.org/hacp or by contacting us at commissions@spahouston.org

2020-21 SPA Performances

Acknowledging the still-uncertain safe return date for large public gatherings, SPA will announce individual performances as they're confirmed. Currently scheduled are shows previously announced and new dates for postponed 2019-20 programs:

- SEP 29, 2020—Drum Tao
- NOV 21, 2020—Crime Junkie Podcast Live
- JAN 29, 2021—Brubeck Brothers Quartet
- JAN 30, 2021—Samin Nosrat, *Salt Fat Acid Heat*
- FEB 2, 2021—Black Violin: Impossible Tour
- MAY 15, 2021—*Nat Geo Live: The Search for Life Beyond Earth*

About Society for the Performing Arts

Society for the Performing Arts (SPA) is the largest independent non-profit arts presenter in the Southwest. Founded in 1966, SPA has sponsored more than 1,000 performances of the world's most significant music, dance and theater artists. Believing the arts are fundamental to thriving communities, SPA, along with a close-knit network of partnering organizations, provides learning and engagement opportunities for adults and children throughout the region. Learn more at spahouston.org

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