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**ANSWERING CALLS FROM FAMILIES AND STUDENTS
HARLEM SCHOOL OF THE ARTS ORGANIZES
IMPRESSIVE ONLINE LEARNING COMMUNITY**

A unified effort by Administrative and Teaching Staff
to help students and families cope during COVID-19 crisis



New York, New York — March 31, 2020...In response to the city’s new reality of social distancing, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Harlem School of the Arts (HSA) on Monday, March 30, launched HSA@HOME. Working together, the administrative and teaching staff have quickly adapted many of the classes, normally taught under the roof of the cultural hub’s 37,000-square foot facility, to an online platform using ZOOM, the leader in modern enterprise video communications. Classes in Dance, Music, Theater, and Art & Design will now be offered online to over 800 students. Those who were signed up for Spring Semester classes, or a Full-Year of class, are now able to resume their activities and continue the HSA experience online.

The organization informed parents and students of their intentions last week, and set about putting all of the pieces of this challenging puzzle together in record time. While not all classes are easily adaptable to this new long distance, online learning — the organization has promised to “continue to develop innovative ways of being together”,

while helping students and families, as well as the community, weather through these difficult times.

“Our staff showed great creativity and ingenuity in the development of HSA@Home in order to meet the needs of our families,” said Eric Pryor, president of HSA. *“We need the arts more than ever, to help us through this unprecedented time in our history,”* he added.



Parents are especially appreciative that the online classes have already been made available, and students are excited at the prospects of seeing the familiar faces of their teachers and their peers – something comforting at a time when they require a return to some semblance of normalcy.

Julia Scott, who describes herself as a proud HSA parent, found the announcement that classes would be transferred to remote learning, *“a saving grace for our children and young artists.”* Ms. Scott was overjoyed that her daughter is able to continue on her musical journey.

“My daughter, Sukanya Scott, who is a HSA prep student in the music department, is having

wonderful lessons with her vocal coach, Nora Graham-Smith. As I sit in the other room having my coffee in the morning, I hear Sukanya and Nora doing scales and learning arias in other foreign languages. I believe the relationship between the two continues even more through this thing we call ‘remote learning technology’. This alternative has proven to be the answer to continuing the HSA experience in lieu of being there in person. We look forward to the renaissance of HSA and continuing with Ms. Nora Graham-Smith. Her support, encouragement and optimism continues to support Sukanya in her love for singing and the arts,” said Julia Scott, adding a special shout out to the teacher with whom her daughter has formed a strong bond, *“We miss you Nora! Hope to see you soon and all of our HSA family!”*

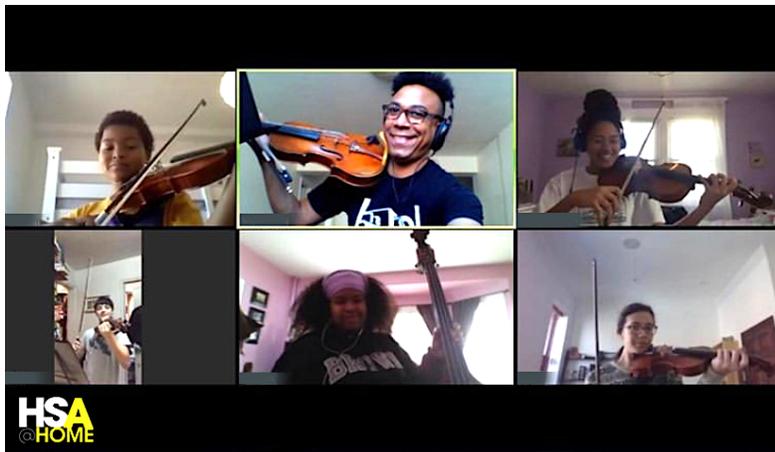
Betty Arrington, whose daughter takes dance classes at HSA also wrote to thank the organization for resuming dance classes, adding, *“My daughter and her dance*



community are so grateful they will be reunited. HSA has risen to the challenge of social distancing with live classes on Zoom. It is good to know that through it all, commitment to excellence at HSA endures.”

The organization has made the process for signing up to HSA@HOME simple for those wishing to continue classes remotely, as well as new students wishing to register. Families may contact Student Services at info@hsanyc.org, and can stay informed by connecting to the organization’s [Instagram](#) (@hsanyc) and [Facebook](#) page.

As of today, parents and students can view the full listing of available classes outlined in the online catalogue, by visiting [HSA@HOME](#).



HSA is currently looking beyond the Spring Semester classes and working to develop “new and exciting ways for our community to stay connected online,” for as long as the crisis requires. The organization is now also turning attention toward developing virtual events,

master classes, virtual performances, as well as organizing Social Media Challenges.

“I just want to applaud our directors, who are absolutely amazing and rallied nearly 70 teaching artists, many of them having to remodel their teaching methodology to an online platform, and themselves having to learn new technology,” said Aubrey Lynch II, Chief Education and Creative Programs Officer at HSA. *“We are so grateful to everyone at HSA for daring to believe in the power of the arts and for mobilizing and making this happen in such a short amount of time.”*

Since the organization first communicated its intentions to move classes online, there have been a few unexpected, yet welcomed surprises. One example has been the noticeable increase in the number of applications from parents new to HSA, as well as applicants from places outside of the tri-state area, and as far away as Washington D.C., which opens up the possibility of broadening the organization’s audience beyond its borders.

Organizations like the Harlem School of the Arts once again demonstrate the importance of the arts in the best of times, and most especially, in critical times like now, when anxiety over COVID-19 has seen a spike across demographics. HSA is laser focused on



refocusing students away from the harshness of social isolation; repurposing the talents of teaching artist, who would have faced unemployment, and providing much needed familiarity, continuity, and joy to students, their families and the community.

Donating to arts organizations is critical at this time. [Click here to donate to HSA.](#)

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About Harlem School of the Arts at The Herb Alpert Center

New York City's premier community arts institution, the Harlem School of the Arts at the Herb Alpert Center stands uniquely apart as the sole provider of arts education in four disciplines: music, dance, theatre, and art & design, all within our award-winning 37,000 square foot facility. The School's reputation for artistic rigor and excellence attracts students of diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds from the five New York City boroughs as well as Westchester County and the tristate area, which includes Connecticut and New Jersey. HSA's alumni and faculty are counted among the most talented leaders in the arts.

For over 50-years HSA has enriched the lives of tens of thousands of people through world-class training in the arts. HSA offers its students the freedom to find and develop the artist and citizen within themselves in an environment that teaches discipline, stimulates creativity, builds self-confidence, and adds a dimension of beauty to their lives, empowering them to become the creative thinkers and innovative leaders of tomorrow. To learn more about the Harlem School of the Arts, please visit www.HSAnyc.org.