



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Aaron L. Myers II, Executive Director

September 27, 2023

The following is a summary of the agency's activities and operations.

1. New Staff

Welcome to our newest team members!

- Jenna Kriegal, Arts Grants Coordinator
- Edward Daniels, Events Coordinator
- Keneshia Mason, Resource Allocation Analyst
- David St. John, Attorney Advisor
- Dwayne Lawson-Brown, Community Engagement Specialist

Bios are attached to this report. We look forward to working with each of them and are excited to see their skills and talents in action.

2. Hip Hop 50th Anniversary Music Festival Update

UPDATE: This event has been cancelled due to ongoing delays in the DC government contracting process, in particular around competition exemptions for artistic services and works of art, and what services qualify for that exemption. Because the existing statute does not specifically define what qualifies as an artistic service, CAH is considering proposing legislation aimed at providing that definition in hopes of mitigating similar delays for future events. In addition, CAH is also considering proposing legislation that would enable the agency to have its own contracting authority independent of OCP. Several other agencies, including DCPL, currently operate in this fashion.

BACKGROUND (from August): *As previously reported, this year's Labor Day Weekend Music Festival at the Lincoln Theatre would be a celebration of the 50th anniversaries of two historic cultural events: the birth of Hip Hop music and the passage of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act. Due to circumstances beyond our control in the contracting process, the Festival will be presented the final weekend of October, instead of Labor Day Weekend, with the theme remaining the same. The issue boiled down to differing interpretations of what is meant by artistic services. Eventually, the Office of Contracting and Procurement accepted our interpretation, but by that point, there was simply not enough time left before Labor Day Weekend, hence, the move to late October.*

3. Mayor's Arts Awards

REMINDER: The 2023 Mayor's Arts Awards will be held on Thursday, September 28 at the Lincoln Theatre. Produced by OCTFME, CAH is supporting the event by underwriting the Lincoln Theatre's venue rental and event related expenses.

4. World Culture Festival

CAH is a sponsor of the World Culture Festival, which will be held on the National Mall from Friday, September 29 through Sunday, October 1. The festival will feature a football field-sized stage hosting hundreds or even thousands of musicians and dancers at a time and food from dozens of countries for attendees to sample. CAH is also sponsoring Long Live GoGo's "Crank Mobile," which is a flatbed truck transporting a GoGo band performing live around the festival site.

5. Art All Night

Art All Night is also being presented this weekend, September 29 and 30 at multiple locations across the city in all 8 wards. CAH is leveraging the agency's sponsorship of the World Culture Festival to promote Art All Night activities. CAH is also contributing our own programming to Art All Night on September 29 with interactive art, live entertainment, and local bites at the northern block of Canal Park, along with extended gallery hours. On both Friday and Saturday, CAH staff will be present at several Art All Night locations throughout the city to distribute information about CAH and collect email signups.

6. Spaces for Arts

To assess the current post-pandemic space needs of arts organizations surveys were sent to all FY23 organizational grantees, 210 in total. Approximately 16% have completed the survey with at least two organizations in every ward having responded. Seventy-six percent of the organizations that responded indicated they have additional space needs. Of those, the biggest needs are for storage/archival space (88% of respondents) and administrative space (84% of respondents). Other need expressed by a large percentage of organizations include classroom space, production space, theatre space, and music rehearsal space (68%, 64%, 60%, and 60% of respondents, respectively).

7. Happy New (Fiscal) Year!

Fiscal Year 2024 for the DC Government begins this Sunday, October 1, 2023. My sincere appreciation to the entire staff for their hard work throughout FY23, and I look forward to many great achievements together in FY24.

Meet CAH's newest teammates!



Dwayne Lawson-Brown (They/He) is a father, DC native, and creative. Dwayne has performed and hosted at The Kennedy Center, Woolly Mammoth Theater, Keegan Theater, The Strathmore, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and is the co-host of Spit Dat DC, the district's longest running open mic. In addition to various poetic accomplishments, Dwayne is a Helen Hayes nominated playwright, competitive karaoke champion, and CEO of Crochet Kingpin Designs.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST



David St. John, a native of Southeastern Virginia, grew up surrounded by music. In his family, the question was not whether you would study classical music but what instrument you would play. David has played the cello since elementary school. Prior to joining the Commission, David clerked for the Honorable Rupa Ranga on the DC Superior Court. He is a 2020 graduate of the Georgetown University Law Center and attended the College of William & Mary for undergrad. In his free time, he loves to fly fish.

ATTORNEY ADVISOR



Resource Allocation Analyst

Keneshia Mason is a born and raised Washingtonian, who went to high school and college here. She was an Accounts Payable Technician for a decade within DC Government and is looking to grow further in the Accounting/Finance field. She enjoys watching movies and tv shows, bowling, and hanging out with family and friends.

Arts Grants Coordinator

Jenna Kriegel is an artist and educator who believes in the power of Creative Community Service. Texas-born and raised in sub-rural Oklahoma, her creative practice is grounded in using traditional handcraft to elevate marginalized voices and contemporary stories.

Jenna earned a Bachelor of Fine Art in Studio Art-Sculpture with a minor in Art History from the University of Oklahoma. She then went on to earn a Master of Fine Art in Studio Art-Sculpture with a Graduate Certificate of Women's Studies from the University of Georgia.

Through gallery exhibitions and teaching, Jenna's professional experience has taken her throughout the US and Europe via short-term exhibits and residencies, and longer professorships. She has had the privilege to teach students aged 5 – 105 from multiple language backgrounds a variety of topics including sculpture, woodworking, metalworking, ceramics, textiles, painting, drawing, art foundations, wilderness survival, sexual health/consent, and English as a second language.

In her spare time, Jenna enjoys yoga, dance, and taking painfully long hikes where she can often be found carrying her elderly dog in a backpack.



Events Coordinator

Edward Daniels is a union actor, event producer, and entrepreneur working steadily in film and theatre in Washington, DC, since 2003. He is pleased to join the CAH team and looks forward to expanding and enhancing the agency's creative programming.

His career credits include work at The Kennedy Center, Round House Theatre, Folger Theatre, and Studio Theatre. For his portrayal of Mikey in Jon Elston's *The Interrogation Room*, Daniels received the Outstanding Achievement in Acting Award from the 2003 Source Theatre Festival. In 2010, for his role as Benny, in the rock-musical *RENT*, produced by the Keegan Theatre, he received a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Ensemble, Resident Musical.

Most recent television and film credits include *Depp vs. Heard* (Netflix) and *Homeland* (Showtime).

Daniels is the Executive Producer and creator of Monologue Madness, DC's annual tournament of acting celebrating 13 years in the District with additional competitions in Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago and NYC.

Daniels is also founding owner of Scorpio Entertainment, a DJ and event production company, celebrating 18 years of business with over 600 events booked in over 300 venues coast-to-coast, including some of the District's largest pop-up dance parties.

Edward is a 2002 graduate of the University of Virginia, holding a B.A. in Philosophy, and is the current Chair of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 8F, representing the residents of Navy Yard.

