Dear friends,

“Was that this season?”

This is a common question from me to my colleagues when we work on our annual Year in Review. We typically present more than 30 professional presentations a year, plus scores of student productions and dozens of rental and community events. By the time we get to March, the previous September always feels like a million years ago.

This year, events that took place in the fall and even March feel like they were not just a million years ago but from a different universe. What is happening in these pictures? Why are all these people standing so close together? Are we smiling without masks? This was a time before we thought of our hands, our breath, our words, as potentially dangerous to our friends, family, and community. Looking at these photos and thinking of the time “before” certainly feels bittersweet.

Since COVID-19 closed Smothers Theatre, Raitt Recital Hall, Lindhurst Theatre, and the Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art, our staff and I have been working hard to determine how we can safely resume doing what we love—presenting exceptional performances and museum exhibitions.

During these difficult times, we all turn to the arts to give us hope, inspiration, community, and joy. As always, the artists we have presented over the years continue to inspire me. Derina Harvey Band, Versa-Style Dance Company, and many of the other artists we presented in 2019–2020 are resilient creators. I encourage you to check out their work from the comfort of your homes, until circumstances allow us to welcome you back to the Center for the Arts.

This year was also the year we lost my friend and colleague Dr. Michael Zakian. Michael was smart, funny, sometimes (often) stubborn, and typically brilliant. As the tributes began pouring in after he passed away in January, a common theme came through from the students he taught, “Dr. Zakian always had time for me.” May we, now more than ever, always have time for each other.

Thank you for your contributions, your kind words, and your prayers during these challenging times. I wish you all good health and happiness, and I can’t wait to welcome you back to the Center for the Arts.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Carson, Managing Director

Our mission

The mission of the Lisa Smith Wengler Center for the Arts at Pepperdine University is to present an innovative, unique, entertaining, and diverse program of exceptional performances and museum exhibitions and thus:

1. Enhance the educational experience at the University for all students and to provide a professional laboratory to train students in the arts
2. Foster artistic excellence and creativity
3. Connect Pepperdine University and the richly varied communities of Los Angeles as well as surrounding communities

Center for the Arts Staff

Rebecca Carson, Managing Director
Rick Aglietti, Technical Director
Monica Chapon, Museum Assistant/Arts Education Coordinator
Tyler Flynn, Marketing and Publicity Manager
Tyler Gabbard, Box Office and Patron Communications Manager
Doug Kern, Production Manager
Danielle Lobello, Director of Production
Nancy Meyer, Interim Museum Director
R.J. Morgan, Events Coordinator/Administrative Assistant
Stewart O’Rourke, Scene Shop Foreman
Paul Vacciano, Theatre Operations Manager
Michael Zakian, Museum Director – In Loving Memory
31,831 patrons served in 2019–2020

3,104 artists, technicians, and onstage participants

25,047 attendees to performances in Smothers Theatre, Lindhurst Theatre, and Raitt Recital Hall

6,774 attendees to the Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art

6,140 Pepperdine University students attending performances, exhibitions, and master classes

4,931 ARTSReach performance attendees

$1,500 worth of tickets donated to 30 deserving nonprofit organizations benefiting arts, education, the local community, and various friends of Pepperdine

904 zip codes served
**Year in review**

**August 27–December 1**
The *It’s All Black and White* exhibition attracts more than 4,000 visitors to the Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art. *(Pictured at left)*

**September 12**
The Center for the Arts opens its season with a thrilling performance by Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee and accomplished star of stage and screen Darlene Love. *(Pictured at left)*

**October 5**
Los Angeles-based dynamic dance group Versa-Style Dance Company debuts their newest full-length production, *ORIGINS of Hip-hop*, which explores the roots and beauty of hip-hop dance culture.

**October 24**
Center for the Arts wins “Best Live Theater” category in the annual Malibu Choice Awards, published by the Malibu Surfside News. Readers voted on their choices for their favorite Malibu businesses. *(Pictured at left)*

**December 3**
Center for the Arts hosts its annual Holiday Boutique at Sherwood Country Club. The attendees contribute more than $10,000 to help fund the ARTSReach community outreach program. *(Pictured at bottom left)*

**December 11–12**
Two-time GRAMMY nominee and guitar virtuoso Tommy Emmanuel performs two shows in Smothers Theatre. This concert marks Emmanuel’s eighth time performing at Pepperdine.

“The venue is nice and intimate. The staff is friendly and welcoming.”
—Larry
January 14
Michael R. Zakian, longtime director of the Weisman Museum and adjunct professor of art history at Seaver College, passes away. Pepperdine University honors Zakian’s legacy by establishing the Michael Zakian Exhibition Fund. (Pictured at right)

January 18
Michael Zakian’s final curated exhibition, *Rodin and Women: Muses, Sirens, Lovers*, debuts at the Weisman Museum. The installation includes more than 40 bronzes, and features some of Rodin’s most famous works, such as *The Kiss*, *Eve*, and *Venus*.

February 6
Professional circus troupe Cirque FLIP Fabrique explores the awe and beauty of winter with its new show, *BLIZZARD*, which features juggling, acrobatics, and live music. (Pictured at right)

February 16
Andrea Roberto, winner of the 2019 Parkening International Guitar Competition, returns to Pepperdine to perform a recital concert. (Pictured at right)

March 8
Producer and musical director Damien Sneed presents *We Shall Overcome*, which showcases repertoire from across the African American music traditions, including gospel, jazz, and spirituals. This show marks the final performance for the 2019–2020 season prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. (Pictured at bottom right)
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* In memoriam

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Bridges Charter School
Calvary Christian School
Canyon Charter Elementary
Conejo Valley Homeschoolers
Fillmore Middle School
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The Sycamore School
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*ARTSReach bus grant recipient

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**House Manager

Schoolchildren prepare to watch Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia's production of The Rainbow Fish
What our patrons are saying
Reviews and Comments, 2019–2020 Season

DARLENE LOVE, SEPTEMBER 12
“Had a BLAST performing at the Lisa Smith Wengler Center for the Arts with my band and fabulous singers! I truly felt the love in the audience, and hope to return soon!”
—Darlene Love

RUBEN SINGS LUTHER
AN EVENING OF LUTHER VANDROSS
STARRING RUBEN STUDDARD
SEPTEMBER 14
“I absolutely LOVED this performance; we partied the entire show. Thank you to Ruben for bringing Luther’s music to life for us.”
—Doc D Thomas-Whitman

“Ruben is outstanding! I closed my eyes and thought Luther was on stage. Ruben brought his down-home southern personality and had us laughing, dancing, and singing!”
—Nina Lewis

“Very good performance, in an intimate venue—not a bad seat in the house. Ruben’s renditions stayed true to the spirit of Luther Vandross, and his engagement with the audience was excellent!”
—victoreyzone

AN EVENING OF STORIES AND SONGS
WITH CHRIS HILLMAN
FEAT. HERB PEDERSEN AND MARK FAINE
SEPTEMBER 21
“Great show with excellent seats. The blend of voices and amazing musicianship made for a wonderful evening.”
—B.P.

“Excellent show! I had a smile on my face from beginning to end.”
—Leslie Howard

SIMPLY THREE, OCTOBER 2
“Thoroughly enjoyed these very talented musicians.”
—Pat

TOMMY EMMANUEL
FEAT. SPECIAL GUESTS JIM AND MORNING NICHOLS
DECEMBER 11–12
“Tommy Emmanuel is one the most talented and entertaining performers I have seen. What this man can do with a guitar has to be seen to be believed. He absolutely blew my mind. I go to 20–30 concerts a year and have done so for years. I can't overstate how awed I was.”
—Bart Tompkins

CLASSIC ALBUMS LIVE PRESENTS:
THE BEATLES—ABBREY ROAD
JANUARY 11
“Amazing show! Such talented musicians and singers!”
—Pam Ann Litz

“What a great concert! An amazing band—would love to see them again doing Led Zeppelin. More Classic Albums Live, please!”
—Anita Roglich

CIRQUE FLIP FABRIQUE, FEBRUARY 6
“What a fun and amazing show! The acrobatics were incredible and they made it look so easy. A must-see for everyone!”
—Lori Fingeroth

“Cirque FLIP Fabrique was absolutely fantastic. The cast members were breathtaking, elegant, and poetic. I was surprised by the grand finale of the show with its crystal snowflakes and sense of fluidity.”
—Deborah Perry

BURTON CUMMINGS, MARCH 2
“It was a pleasure to see one of rock's most amazing singers! Burton Cummings is charming with his stories of how these hit songs came into being.”
—Lloyd

“Entertaining night of music with one of the contemporary masters.”
—Wayne Rose

Lisa Smith Wengler Center for the Arts
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