

June 20, 2019

# ARTS & CULTURE PROGRAM

SPRING 2019



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## ACES "ARTS & CULTURE"

The ACES "Arts & Culture" program continued its momentum during the winter/spring 2019 season with our ACES students attending exquisite dance, symphonic, musical theater, and even a Shakespearean theater production right here in the Washington/metropolitan area!



## STEP AFRIKA!

ACES students from Paint Branch High School attended the 25th Anniversary Season Performance of Step Afrika! at Strathmore Music Center in January, 2019. At this performance, Step Afrika! celebrated 25 years of stepping while paying homage to the company's deep connections to South African dance, music, and culture. Our ACES students witnessed a retrospective performance of the company's best loved works including *Wade, Passing 25* and *Nxt/Stp: Hip Hop*, featuring the critically acclaimed artists of Step Afrika! along with some of our region's most incredible step teams. Special thanks to our wonderful academic coaches, Melissa Gudiel and Terré Thomas, for their chaperoning and support that evening.



**ACES students from Paint Branch High School at Step Afrika!**



## **BALTIMORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (BSO) DRESS REHEARSAL**

In March, at the invitation of our treasured collaborator, Carole Wysocki, (Director of Education and Community Engagement at Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, BSO), our ACES students from James Hubert Blake High School attended an open dress rehearsal of the brilliant Baltimore Symphony Orchestra at Strathmore Music Center. The repertoire rehearsed included compositions by American composers Copland, Bernstein, Villa-Lobos, as well as a world premier by Roxanna Panufnik. The exciting part of the open rehearsal was that the composer worked alongside Maestra Marin Alsop, BSO Music Director, as the composition was being played for the first time. The synergy among the woman conductor, woman composer, and the exquisite BSO musicians was exciting to watch. After the rehearsal, our students had the chance to meet Maestra Marin Alsop and talk with her on the stage of the Strathmore Music Center. Special thanks to Minjote Mekonen, academic coach at Blake High School for her support in making this happen!



**ACES students from Montgomery College at "Les Miserables"**



**Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's open Dress Rehearsal at Strathmore**

## **YOUNG ARTISTS OF AMERICA CONCERT PRODUCTION OF "LES MISERABLES"**

Also in March, our ACES students and families had a chance to attend the ever timely production of Young Artists of America's concert production of "Les Miserables". YAA's Executive Director, Lisa Larragoite, and Rolando Sanz, Producing and Artistic Director & Founder of YAA, once again, graciously donated 50 tickets to our ACES families to attend this riveting performance at Strathmore. The production was breathtaking – from the full orchestral accompaniment, conducted by Maestro Kristofer Sanz, to the excellence of the high school students who performed. They all received an instantaneous standing ovation at the conclusion for their truly professional performance! One of our ACES students who attended shared her thoughts about the production:

*"Overall, the YAA performance was stunning. I was hesitant at first - movie theaters are our norm. It is rare to get an opportunity to see the Performing Arts, especially at Strathmore! My sister and I thought that the performance was impressive. Everything from the vocals to the lighting was astonishing to me. I felt as if I was right in the story. Excited for the next opportunity!" - Tracy Ayida, Montgomery College ACES student*

Special thanks to our ACES academic coaches, Traci Johnson, and Brenda Crist for their support.

### **SHAKESPEARE'S "LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST" AT THE FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY'S HISTORIC STAGE**

Finally, in early May, our ACES students from Clarksburg High School attended the rollicking and contemporary performance of Shakespeare's "Love's Labor's Lost" at the Folger Shakespeare Library's historic stage across from the US Capitol. In this comedy, Shakespeare weaves a delicious play full of confusing relationships, clowns, folly and the follies of the heart. What excited the students was seeing this Shakespeare play at the Folger Shakespeare Library, home to the world's largest Shakespeare collection! The Folger is a major international center for scholarly research and a lively venue for exhibitions, literary programs, and the performing arts. The actual theater, where our students attended, is modeled after the innyard theaters popular in Shakespeare's day, and hosts more than 40,000 audience members each year. Special thanks to Terré Thomas for her support in making this experience for our ACES students a reality.

