ARTIST IN FOCUS

This month’s Artist in Focus is Kyrese Washington, a local musician. p. 01

ARTIST IN FOCUS

By Kyrese Washington, Musician
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Born and raised in Raleigh, North Carolina, Kyrese Washington is a burgeoning musician looking to spread their love of music to anyone they come across. Kyrese loves to be involved in music in as many ways as possible, including performing, teaching, and composing. This love began in the 6th grade when Kyrese picked up the flute and joined the band out of pure curiosity and hopes of making new friends.

Ten years later, Kyrese is a senior at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, completing their bachelor’s degree in Flute Performance. Kyrese is also the principal flutist of the Appalachia Wind Symphony and teaches private lessons at Music & Arts in Burlington.

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ARTS HAPPENING

The Carolina Theatre is downtown Greensboro’s original performing arts center, find out more in this feature by Meagan Kopp! p.02

AG MAKING IT WORK

Read about the inspiring story of an ArtsGreensboro grantee, Julia Ridley-Smith. p. 03

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 ARTS HAPPENING
By Meagan Kopp, Carolina Theatre’s Director of Marketing & Public Relations

The Carolina Theatre, originally billed “The Showplace of the Carolinas,” opened on Halloween in 1927 as a vaudeville theater, and was Greensboro’s first commercial building to be air-conditioned (you can still see the original “refrigerated air” vents in the lobby). It was intended to be the regional headquarters of the Publix-Saenger Theater Corporation until the Depression struck. Even during the Depression, the cost for an evening of entertainment was affordable at just $0.75 for an adult at The Carolina.

Through the decades, the theater has survived: vaudeville; silent movies turned talkies; the post-WWII Saturday morning Circle K Club; the decline of downtown as life moved to the suburbs; the threat of the wrecking ball, which was stopped when the United Arts Council of Greater Greensboro stepped in to save the building from demolition; a catastrophic fire in 1981; repairs and renovations; and the addition of a flexible theater space on the third floor, the theater’s original sign shop, now known as The Crown at The Carolina.

Today the theater is a thriving part of downtown Greensboro, allowing guests to appreciate the ambiance of an earlier era while enjoying performances by national entertainers and local performers. In addition to concerts, movies, and stage shows, The Carolina is also a dramatic gathering place for meetings and conferences, weddings, receptions, parties, and more. It welcomes thousands of people each year to go back in time and recapture memories, or to make new ones that can be cherished for years to come.

For more information about The Carolina Theatre and our extensive December programs, please visit https://carolinatheatre.com/ We would love to see you there!

ARTIST IN FOCUS...CONT.

While at UNC Greensboro, Kyrese has distinguished themselves as an accomplished musician within the school of music. Recently, Kyrese was announced the winner of the Raleigh Area Flute Association (RAFA) Review and Contest competition. Not only did Kyrese win in their division this year, but Kyrese has also won in years past, accumulating five wins and two honorable mentions throughout their musical career. Kyrese’s most notable accomplishment has been participating in the search committee to find the next director of UNC Greensboro’s School of Music.

As Kyrese finishes their degree, they plan to take a year off before returning to school to complete a master’s degree in flute performance. During this year, Kyrese plans to continue teaching privately at Music & Arts and performing and composing at their leisure. If you want to follow Kyrese through their musical development, please check out their website at kyresewashington.wixsite.com/website
AG MAKING IT WORK
By Julia Ridley-Smith, ArtsGreensboro Grantee

Growing up in Greensboro, I danced, drew, painted, and acted in plays. I read all the time and wrote stories. Anything that sparked my imagination and allowed me to express myself—that was what I wanted to do.

After majoring in English at UNC, I earned an MFA in creative writing at Sarah Lawrence College. For many years I freelanced as copyeditor; then, in 2017, I started teaching writing at UNCG. Now I’m back at Chapel Hill as the 2021-22 Kenan Visiting Writer. I love watching students grow as their reading and writing skills evolve.

In 2016 ArtsGreensboro awarded me an Artist Support Grant. I used the funds to attend a writing residency at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. There I worked on essays that became my first book, a memoir called The Sum of Trifles (University of Georgia Press, 2021).

The book is about cleaning out my parents’ house after they died and the various meanings of the things they left behind. It’s about how our relationship with objects shapes our identities, and it’s also about grief and the difficulty of letting go. For thirty years, my parents kept a shop called Tyler-Smith Antiques at the corner of Smith and Simpson Streets. So when The Sum of Trifles came out this November, it felt like a true homecoming to be able to launch the book downtown at Scuppernong Books.

For more information about Julia and The Sum of Trifles visit www.juliaridleysmith.com

I am so grateful for the support of my family, my community, and ArtsGreensboro!

Artist Support Grants are funded by the North Carolina Arts Council and provide professional and artistic development grants to eligible artists. ArtsGreensboro is a NC Arts Council Designated Partner and facilitates the Artist Support Grant Program with the Arts Council of Winston-Salem & Forsyth County for the five-county region, including Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, and Randolph.
The Christmas Shoes has been uplifting families since 2012 and will return to the stage on December 18. As we continue to navigate the pandemic, we will present this show in the safest way possible. Last year, this original holiday ballet was transformed into a film. The students starred in the film and then had a drive-in movie experience with their families in the Graybar parking lot across the street from Royal Expressions. The film was sold online, and there was a special Zoom showing for viewers to watch live together from across the country.

Just as many art lovers look towards the Nutcracker, many people have begun to make The Christmas Shoes a tradition for their families. The show includes modern-day Christmas music and a meaningful storyline that is sure to warm hearts.

This year, the cast includes all students at Royal Expressions School of Dance, with Kinu Dailey as the mother for the second year in a row, but this will be her first time performing on stage for the show. Also featured are 7-year-old Anastasia Duncan as the child and 16-year-old Jahayla Lambb as the shopper. The performance will be at the Dana Auditorium at Guilford College on December 18 at 6 pm.

For more information about The Christmas Shoes, contact Princess at 336-944-6146 or email princess@royalexpressions.org. For Box Office information, visit http://tinyurl.com/reboxoffice. Ticket prices range from $10 – $35 depending on what viewing experience is chosen.

For more information on Royal Expression's Contemporary Ballet, visit https://www.roylexpressions.org/
As we work together in support of the arts, we are grateful to the ArtsGreensboro Board of Directors for their unwavering commitment, leadership, insight, and inspiration. Thank you!

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Happy Holidays from our ArtsGreensboro Family to Yours!

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