

FY20 Annual Report

Finding new ways to bring people together
July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020



**WASHINGTON
IMPROV
THEATER**



Mark Chalfant and Molly Graham
Cover: Cast of The Feminine Experience

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WIT's mission has always been to create connection and bolster creativity—and during the past year we achieved both. From staging some of WIT's most elaborate and innovative shows to continuing to foster inclusion and diversity on stages and in our classrooms, WIT continued to work to find new ways to bring people together.

And as the world spun more out of control, improv helped us forge connections and bring joy at a time when we needed it the most. When COVID-19 hit, it shut down every aspect of WIT programming overnight. After absorbing the shock, WIT's staff and community did what we do best: improvise. We moved shows, classes, free workshops, and organizational training online, enabling us to connect with more people in more places from home.

I am proud of the creativity and cohesion of this community. Although it's agonizing to be physically apart for so long, and it's unclear as we write this report just when we'll gather again in person, we've got each others' backs.

-Mark Chalfant, Artistic/Executive Director

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FY20 By the Numbers

8,971

in-person performance
attendees

2,070

Harold
Night attendees

184

youth engaged

25

diversity scholarship
recipients

3

countries (plus U.S.) took
online Improv for All
workshops

24

sessions of
electives offered

29

states (plus DC) represented
among students in our online
classes and workshops

80

WIT@Work workshops
held

2,600

people trained with
WIT@Work

191

monthly donors

107

volunteers

958

hours volunteered

Shows



Cast members of The Cookout

WIT fostered community on the stage and online with innovative artistic programming. FY20 performances continued to push the boundaries of improv with enhanced production values, expanded representation, and increased opportunities for our community members to present their visions on stage. Company ensembles, Harold teams, featured ensembles, special productions, and our exploration into the new world of virtual performances highlighted the talent of our community and brought people together in new ways.

WIT's Director's Series and Launchpad shows helped realize ambitious creative visions from our community members

Starship Odyssey: The improvised live summer blockbuster Starship Odyssey spanned centuries and star systems and explored what it means to be human. The show's cast became the crew of the Starship Odyssey who must travel 500 years in the past, to the year 2019, in an attempt to save the future. Conceived of and directed by Denny Johnson, the ambitious production ran as part of the Improv Saves the World series. The show featured intricate lighting by Production Manager Raymond Simeon and elaborate costumes—including custom uniforms—by Bill Nelson. (Summer 2019)

The Heist: Inspired by true events documented in the movie Dog Day Afternoon, The Heist was an improvised drama centered on a 1970s bank robbery gone wrong. Helmed by Joe Randazzo and Justine Hipsky, the show was remounted at WIT for Seasonal Disorder after premiering at Capital Fringe Festival. The cast rotated into different roles each night (robber, bank hostage, FBI agent)—and no one, including the improvisers, knew who would make it out of the bank alive at the end. The production featured a holiday-festooned set, props, costumes, and sound effects. (December 2019)

Starship Odyssey's Keenan Gibson, Jane White, Cara Popecki



Launchpad: WIT started Launchpad to allow new directors to create works in an iterative process. Premiering at the DCAC Road Show in fall 2019, Launchpad staged seven new productions—ranging from a show focused on the impacts of climate change directed by meteorologist Tom Di Liberto to an all-female production helmed by Cara Popecki and Kelsie Anderson designed to help an audience member answer a question through a combination of Tarot and improv. This program also led to the weekly show People of the

Cast members of The Cookout



The Cookout was WIT's first-ever celebration of Black improv in the DMV area

Curated by WIT performers Krystal Ramseur and Jamal Newman, the two-night production featured WIT Featured Ensemble **Lena Dunham**, guest troupes **Casually Dope** of Baltimore and **I Don't Know Her** (a home-grown DC team created in FIST 2019). The show also showcased the debut performances of two new teams featuring all-Black casts.

Kicking off the production was a Sunday cookout bringing the community together for two nights of music, dancing, and improv. (February 2020)

"I want people to know there is room for more than one or two teams with Black people. Link up with the community and form a squad. Don't feel like you have to wait to ask to join an established group. One of the most exciting things for me was that as I was reaching out to find out who was interested, I didn't realize how many Black improvisers we have here. A part of me was worried we didn't have enough for two new teams but I am glad I was wrong. The Cookout is already doing its job in connecting players who maybe didn't get to mingle and share their experiences with each other before."

- **Jamal Newman**





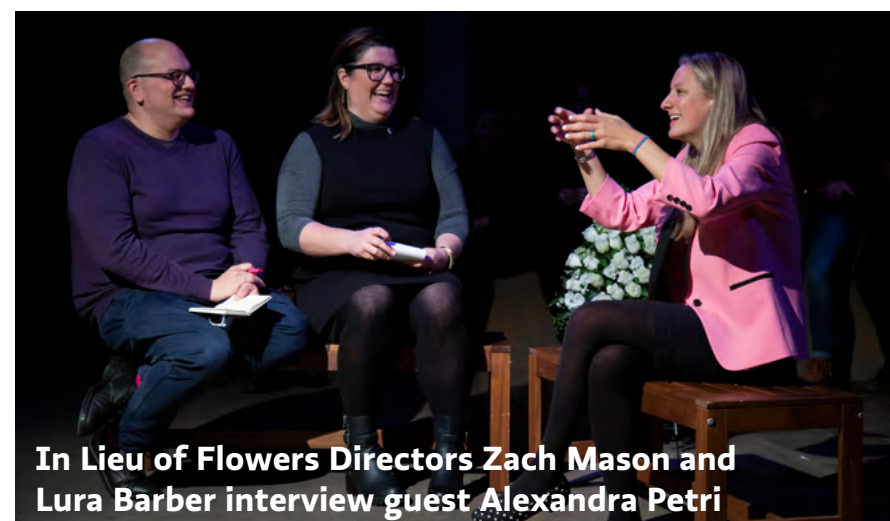
Harold Night turns 10!! In May, WIT celebrated Harold Night's 10-year anniversary with a virtual retrospective show bringing performers from Harold teams across the decade together for a night of discussion, reflection, nostalgia, and joy. The virtual aspect enabled WIT to assemble performers from across the country, as former Harold Team members joined from Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, as well as DC. The show also featured a Facebook chat among the audience members that was as lively and nostalgic as the show itself. Improviser and graphic designer Alex Kazanas designed special posters commemorating each of the 45 Harold teams. (May 2020)

In Lieu of Flowers returns. Using love, loss, joy, grief, and mortality to celebrate life, In Lieu of Flowers memorialized an audience member's life through a fully improvised funeral inspired by an interview. The show, which ran for four weeks as part of WIT's Life and Death series, included special guest interviewees Popville blogger Dan Silverman and The Washington Post's Alexandra Petri. (November 2019)

WIT goes virtual

When the pandemic hit, WIT took its first foray into virtual shows, creating a platform where the community could come together online to innovate new shows:

- * Improv duo and real-life couple Bugs premiered their virtual date night show.
- * New Featured Ensemble and 2019 Fighting Improv Smackdown Tournament (FIST) winners **The Broken Bones** performed a weekly virtual set inspired by an audience member's gnarly injury story.
- * WIT collaborated with Perfect Liars Club for two online interactive storytelling shows in which all cast members were WIT performers. The audience engaged in an interrogation of the four storytellers on Zoom in an aim to suss out which one was lying.
- * Dan Milliken hosted an improvised cabaret night called "Singin' The Blues With Red Snapper," where he made up songs based on suggestions from the virtual audience.



In Lieu of Flowers Directors Zach Mason and Lura Barber interview guest Alexandra Petri

WIT's ensembles continued to innovate and grow

Hellcat added new members Marissa Chaffee and Simone Webster and brought in new coach Macey Schiff. The all-female identifying team also tackled a new format called “Exploding Dinosaur Pillow Fight,” in which the first three scenes begin with the same two lines (re-contextualized each time), and the show ends with those same lines.

WIT's longest running ensemble **iMusical** continued to delight audiences with its musical performances while adding a new accompanist to its ranks, Michael O'Connor,

following a months-long search.

Madeline added five new players—Stacey Axler, Maria Gahan, Adam Levine, Kenny Park Yi, and Slli'm Williams—and new coach Jamal Newman. The troupe continued performing its “Ugly Flower” format.

Nox! brought on new coach Jo Scott and continued playing with its modified deconstruction format in live shows. Following the start of the pandemic, Nox! began a biweekly virtual show with the La Ronde format, which showcases a daisy-chain of two-person relationships.



Sean Paul Ellis and Geoff Corey of Nox!

Longtime team **Love Onion** said goodbye in September after four years as a House Ensemble and 2.5 years as a Harold Team. The farewell show featured alumni from across the team's history (some returning from Seattle and North Carolina), a video montage, and bags of Funyuns.

New ensemble **Uncle Gorgeous** premiered with five former Love Onion players (Joey Breems, Margaret Lee, Kristina Martinez, Jordana Mishory, and Vic Whitten) and four new members (Tara Demmy, Tom Di Liberto, Olivia Martinez, and Kelsey Peters). Coached by Neil Baron, the team performed shows in which each scene was inspired by an audience suggestion.

WIT welcomed three new featured ensembles

The Featured Ensemble program broadens WIT's community of improvisers by giving exposure and recognition to groups WIT recognizes as doing high quality work and who may be underrepresented on our stage.

WIT's cadre of featured ensembles doubled in FY20, as three new teams joined the program:

The Broken Bones: Winners of the 2019 FIST competition, The Broken Bones became a featured ensemble committed to healing injuries through comedy. The group produces their improvised show based on gruesome physical or emotional injury stories from the audience.

The Hypothesis: The team exclusively consists of scientists and science enthusiasts who combine science and improv to both inform and delight audiences. Their shows often start by attempting to answer a science-based question from the audience, such as "Why is the sky blue?" or "How does memory work?"

Ugh: Composed of gay improvisers from WIT ensembles past and present, Ugh explains their shows are like gay men: "They come in every shade of the rainbow. They can be classy, trashy, heart-wrenching, absurd, but are always (always!) fun."

These three teams join Lena Dunham, Poetic Resistance, and LIZARD GIRL, the three original members of the program that were all renewed.



Cast of The Hypothesis



Cast of The Broken Bones

Featured ensembles added players, Harold teams welcomed new talent

During the past year, **Lena Dunham** added new member Bam Alston and performed in the Juneteenth Black Impact virtual fundraiser, which raised more than \$11,000 for Black organizations. **LIZARD GIRL** added three new members: Justin Carty, Kate Symes, and Alex Waddell. And in an aim to elevate the social and racial justice aspect of its mission, **Poetic Resistance** added a discussion portion to its format of scenes inspired by a poem, in which performers share personal experiences to round out the themes of the poem. Poetic Resistance also added new member Michael Hendrix.

Harold Night continued to grow and evolve.

Over the course of the year, the Harold program featured 92 players, including 23 players new to the program. The Harold teams that took the stage were **Tiovivo**, **Wonder Whale**, **Oh That Baby**, **Out Sick**, **Ruth**, **Ghost Club**, **The Lineup**, **Dangerine**, **Hudson**, **Boom Crunch**, **Semiprecious**, and **Lava Kids**.

In the fall, Harold Night moved to an earlier 7:30 and 8:30 time slot, and also saw the addition of a 9:30 show to some Harold Nights called “Bonus Round,” featuring an indie troupe or special programming. This slot saw shows such as the multilingual Epiphany Block and Remake, a show

Cast of Lena Dunham



conceived by Samantha Watson that remakes a popular audience-suggested movie into a RomCom.

Following the start of the pandemic, Hudson’s Turner Meeks launched Solo Harold Night, in which members of various Harold teams and company ensembles performed solo sets on Instagram Live.

Christina Floriza in The Feminine Experience



The Feminine Experience: An all-female and non-binary cast joined forces to give voice to the experience of, and rebellions against, being female. Each uncensored, uninhibited, unapologetic personal monologue was inspired by a monologue title supplied by the audience. The production benefited House of Ruth, an organization providing comprehensive services to the victims of intimate partner violence and their children. (February 2020)

Improvapalooza: Improvapalooza continued to feature one-of-a-kind experimental performances—and a planning committee representing every facet of WIT’s community from performers to students to volunteers. Shows included a rave dance party, an entire Fighting Improv Smackdown Tournament competition in 15 minutes, and Mayo Poppins. (August 2019)



Improvapalooza’s World’s Greatest Detectives

District Improv Festival: WIT played host to the seventh annual District Improv Festival. Produced in alliance with District Improv Company, the festival at WIT’s headquarters and home venue Source featured shows going on simultaneously in the black box and the rehearsal room and a headlining performance by New York-based musical team Rumbleteaser. (September 2019)

People of the District: Helmed by Erick Acuña, this show—which started as part of Launchpad and then moved to the internet—explores the DC experience through interviews with fascinating local Washingtonians. Guests have included Shea Van Horn (a renowned drag queen who runs Online Drag Storytime and is an award-winning DJ) and Jenny Splitter (a freelance science writer and the story director of TBD Immersive). (ongoing)

Classes

WIT's classes reached new heights in FY20, as the program presented a breadth of new offerings and electives, reached more people in more places than ever before, expanded the diversity program, and saw its largest-ever class of new students.

Winter 2020 had the highest Level 1 enrollment in our history with 172 first-time students—and total winter enrollment was the largest in WIT's history. These records would have set WIT up for the biggest year of class enrollments in the organization's history, but for the pandemic.

However, online offerings helped WIT expand its reach, as students enrolled in classes, workshops and Improv for All workshops from 29 states and DC—and three countries.



Students in Saleh Karaman's Level 4 class



**Students in Jordana Mishory's
Premise-Based Improv Elective**

WIT classes went virtual, providing a “light in the dark” for students

As improvisers across the city and country started doing improv online for the first time, WIT offered a free three-week Introduction to Online Improv course, taught by WIT@Work Director John Windmueller, alongside faculty member Caroline Howe. In this workshop, participants explored different ways to do improv online and created their own weekly improv performances. The course had an active Facebook community of 200 people and served students from all over the world.

Starting in the spring, Education Director Jonathan Murphy rebuilt the curriculum to facilitate online learning, and WIT

staff provided free workshops to teachers and coaches to share tools and best practices for virtual improv teaching.

The move online in the spring was met with positive feedback. Students shared that improv classes helped relieve the stresses of quarantine by providing them an outlet to express their emotions and experiences. The format also offered them a welcoming and supportive environment that one student described as a “light in the dark” during this period. Feedback noted that the online format presented freedoms from traditional on-stage obstacles that helped students feel more confident and be less self-conscious.



WIT students in fall 2019

Electives flourished in-person and online

In FY20, WIT offered a record number of opportunities for students to expand their study outside of the core curriculum through advanced format and elective classes. Between in-person and online classes, WIT offered a record 15 different electives (offered in 24 classes). Those classes include a full 8-week musical improv curriculum—offering two different levels looking at improvised song and scene work into song taught by Ryan Brookshire. A number of the electives offered online focused on the benefits of what can be taught through video conferencing, whether it be a specific improv skill or using the tenets of improv as a jumping-off point for comedic writing.

Elective Classes Offered in FY20

- Advanced Harold with Jordana Mishory *
- Advanced Format: Improvised Sketch with Ashley Siebels *
- Advanced Character: Game from the Inside Out with Kate Symes
- Foundations of Musical Improv with Ryan Brookshire **
- Level 2: Scene into Song with Ryan Brookshire *
- Intro to Sketch with Ashley Siebels *^
- Writing Your First TV Pilot with Greg Tindale *^
- Premise-Based Improv Online with Jordana Mishory *^
- Improv Games for Kids and Families Online with Samanta Watson ^
- Intro to Formats with John Windmueller ^
- Comedic Songwriting with Ryan Brookshire ^
- Finish Your TV Pilot with Greg Tindale *^
- Comedic Character Writing and Performance with Alan Prunier ^
- Intro to Short Form Improv Online with Samantha Watson ^
- Writing Satire Online with Natalia Kaye ^

Key

- * offered two times
- ** offered three times
- ^ offered online



WIT U taught unique skills, drew visiting teaching artists

WIT University (WIT U) workshops have proven to be an exciting way for student improvisers to build unique skills in stand-alone, specialized sessions. A recent restructuring of this program also made it easier for WIT's faculty to teach these one-off workshops. WIT was on track in FY20 to have the most workshops offered in a single year. Even with COVID-19, WIT offered the same number of workshops in FY20 as we had in FY19.

Based on student feedback, WIT offered workshops in accents and voices, musical improv, initiations, and physicality in performance. We also featured workshops from visiting artists including renowned teachers Megan Gray and Bianca Casusol from The Magnet Theater in New York City and Los Angeles-based clowning expert Mike Funt from The Clown School.

WIT restructured diversity scholarship program to increase access

WIT is deeply committed to making improv a diverse and inclusive space. In FY20, we restructured our diversity scholarship program in an aim to support even more students and expand access to WIT classes for need-based applicants.

With these changes, WIT can support more students and make improv accessible to more people. WIT divided the program into two tracks:

1. The Financial Aid for Underrepresented Communities scholarship will provide financial aid to need-based students for the first two levels of WIT's training program, and
2. The Diversity Scholarship for Current WIT Students will be a need-blind scholarship to fully fund current WIT students as they move through Level 3 and above. This scholarship is equivalent to \$720 with an additional \$240 if a student needs to repeat a course.

In FY20, WIT supported 25 students in the diversity scholarship, and 14 students in the program completed the curriculum. Two former diversity scholarship students joined Harold teams, three scholarship recipients joined the ensemble program, and one person joined the featured ensemble program.



I Don't Know Her

Since the program's inception, it has supported 46 students of color. Of these, 27 have completed the five-level training program, and 20 have been cast on WIT performance teams and projects.

We also made strong progress on diversifying our teaching body. 55 percent of classes were taught by women this year, making WIT a national leader among improv theaters in our ratio of female teachers (especially in upper levels). Teachers of color have grown to teach 21 percent of WIT classes.

Community



Improv for All workshop at The Cheshire led by Anuj Christian

WIT committed to its community in person and online

WIT continued its community outreach through programming with school and library systems throughout the DMV, especially with Virginia libraries. Our outreach includes work with youth, an ongoing engagement with women experiencing homelessness at Calvary Women's Services, a new engagement with the Armed Services Arts Partnership, as well as various engagements done for free or at low cost.



Leslie Silverman and family

Leslie Silverman signed up to take a virtual Improv for All class with her husband and two kids. Following the class she said, “Within a few minutes of starting, I didn’t feel self-conscious or nervous about making a fool of myself. It was so great to be able to let down my guard as I saw others in the class do the same.”

She noted that it was a fun family activity: “I am so so so tired of virtual activities at this point in quarantine. But that’s only because they are not nearly as interactive or truly hilariously enjoyable as this workshop was.”

Improv for All workshops provided specialized sessions, included international participants

WIT’s free Improv for All workshops provide a taste of our Foundations of Improv class to a broad cross-section of Washingtonians—and for the first time, people around the country and world.

Throughout summer 2019, WIT offered a number of free workshops in conjunction with Virginia Library branches. During that time we also programmed specialized sessions for groups in need of community and support. In July 2019, we offered workshops to teachers (led by Justine Hipsky) and IT professionals (led by Jonathan Murphy). In August 2019, Ceci De Robertis led a free workshop

for parents to take together with their kids ages 10-12. And Erin Murray led several workshops entirely in American Sign Language, including one workshop online.

After COVID-19 began, we hosted a number of online Improv for All workshops to help DC residents find connection during this time of social distancing and isolation. The virtual nature of these workshops enabled students to connect from around the world. Participants in FY20 came from 25 states and DC, as well as three countries: Canada, India, and the Cayman Islands.

Following one of these free Zoom workshops, one student wrote us to say thank you, noting: “It was wonderful to creatively connect during this time.”



Instructor Jack Novak leads students at Marie Reed Elementary

WIT continued its after-school programming at Marie Reed Elementary, Sitar Arts Center, and other DC Public Elementary Schools, helping kids with everything from building listening skills to empowering them with self-confidence.

WIT also worked with teens at the Kingman Boys and Girls Club, teaching them improv basics and how they can help foster teamwork, listening, and creativity in and out of the classroom. Following the class, students showcased their new skills at Source.

As our community partners adjusted to the pandemic, WIT was relied upon to continue our programming online. New organizations, like Lane Social Club, reached out to us to provide classes. Teachers were trained to use online tools, and the curriculum was rebuilt to ensure that we could continue a high-quality arts education.

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[The Kingman students] spend so much of their day being the adults, worrying about school, with tremendous pressure. Especially as students who are predominantly accustomed to poverty, they are so conditioned to hearing the word NO. To see them tap into improv helped them remember that growing up can also mean saying ‘yes, and’ to lots of great experiences.

– Cara Popecki, WIT player and workshop instructor

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Students from the Armed Services Arts Partnership perform in their student showcase



Community Fund raises more than \$20,000

The WIT Community Fund, which helps fund all of our community activities for WIT's 2020 fiscal year, saw success in supporting community programming. In a coordinated campaign, WIT's community raised more than \$20,000 from nearly 250 donors.

WIT partnered with veterans organization

WIT partnered with the Armed Services Arts Partnership to teach improv workshops to veterans, aiming to provide catharsis and a creative outlet to armed services personnel who are reintegrating into civilian life. The first class, in fall 2019, was taught by veteran and WIT teacher Pete Bergen.

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Prior to this course, over the past year, I was struggling with two separate military-related deaths of two very dear friends of mine. I was sad and angry and all the emotions you usually get when grieving. I started to distract myself with comedy, whether it was movies, stand ups, etc. This class gave me a healthy distraction from the stress of work and the often serious environment that the military often provides. Like I mentioned before, the one thing the military does do is provide that sense of community—it was also nice to find that feeling amongst other veterans looking to enjoy and express themselves through comedy.

– *Desiree Rivera, class participant*

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Improv boosted confidence for women experiencing homelessness

In FY20, WIT continued its work with Calvary Women's Services, a nonprofit in Anacostia that helps women experiencing homelessness get back on their feet.

Calvary's Education Coordinator Elaine Johnson said the skills taught in the class "are so helpful for our residents, both in the time they spend with us in a community setting and in the many tasks that they undertake in order to move forward with their lives."

Hellcat ensemble member, teacher, and board member Krystal Ramseur volunteers with this program to lead the sessions. She noted each class starts with a "stretch and share" connection exercise as a chance for the women to check in with themselves and ends with a full group exercise.

A George Washington University nursing student named Lily who has been working with the women dropped into one of the sessions led by Krystal. Lily said she observed how improv fostered connection between the participants and allowed everyone to play in an atmosphere devoid of stigma and judgement.

"In those moments, when all the barriers were down, it didn't matter who was homeless or not, who was a student or a resident, who was Black or white—all that mattered was the laughter that filled the room," Lily said.



A workshop at Calvary Women's Services

“

These women inspire me. During our stretch and share, women have opened up and shared very personal issues that they are dealing with or have recently overcome and everyone in the class gives that person their full attention. After sharing these women have said it felt so good to have a place to just let that out.

– *Krystal Ramseur, who teaches the Calvary sessions*

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WIT@Work

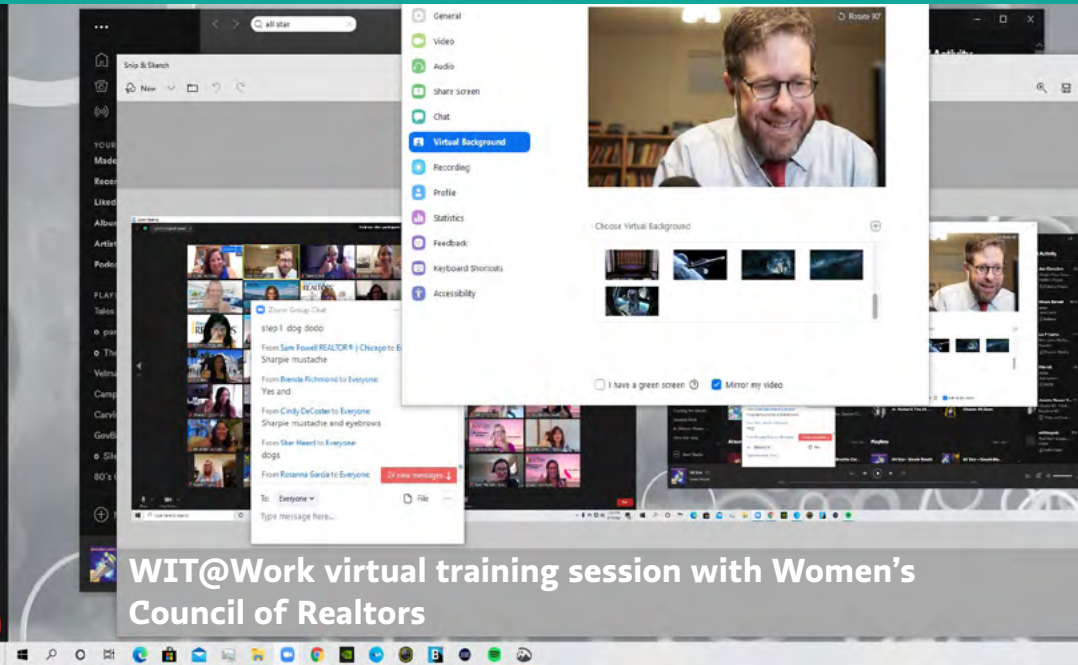
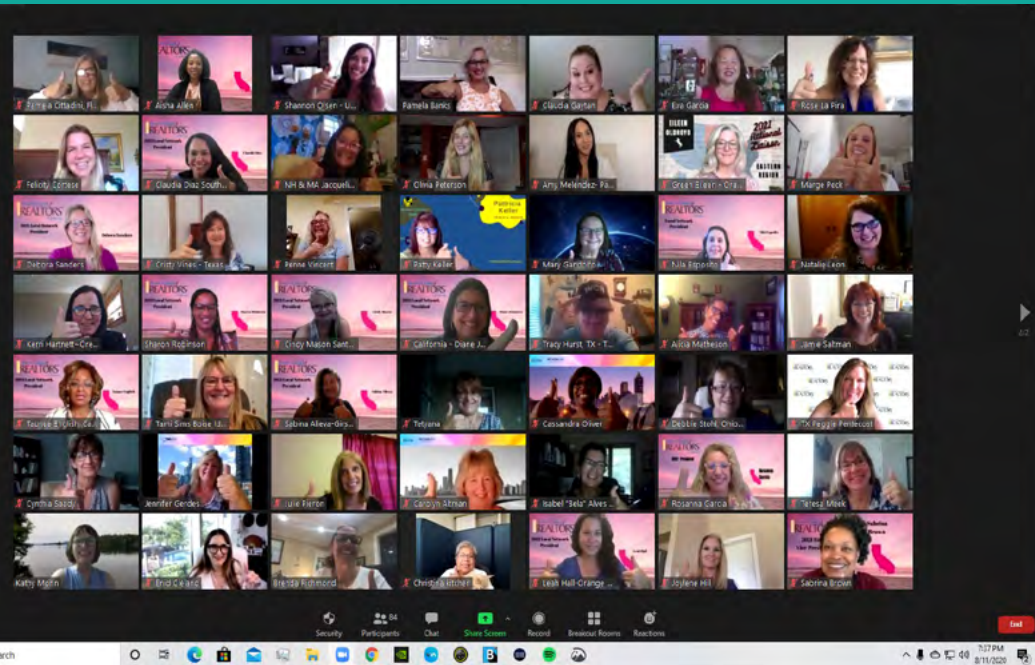
From private to nonprofit sectors, applied improv helps teams collaborate

Some 2,600 people went through a training session, learning about how improv skills can help make their workplaces more collaborative and creative. Even with COVID-19 impacting in-person trainings during the last third of the year, WIT held a record-breaking 80 sessions and increased revenue by 18 percent over the prior year.

“Whether it was in person or online, WIT@Work trainings and business-focused classes helped colleagues and professionals connect with one another,” said WIT@Work Director John Windmueller.

WIT@Work session with Google





WIT@Work virtual training session with Women's Council of Realtors

WIT@Work worked with federal agencies, major companies and nonprofits throughout the year.

In FY20 WIT, worked with Deloitte, KMPCG, State Department, HRSA, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, IMF, Fors Marsh Group, GW Law School, AstraZeneca, and Hilton. WIT@Work also presented an Improv for All workshop designed specifically for attorneys in an event co-sponsored by the Washington Council of Lawyers.

In the fall, WIT@Work spent the day in New York to train a group of user experience designers and researchers at Google on the basics of improv and how improv can facilitate creativity and help teams communicate. The session included a performance

featuring NYC-based WIT alums Jaci Pulice, Bryan Jackson, and Katie Ozog.

A number of WIT@Work customers have continued to come back for additional trainings. In FY20, WIT@Work had 15 repeat clients accounting for 26 training engagements. Some of these customers, including the Women's Council of Realtors, moved to working with us online. Following a recent session, the point person for the Women's Council of Realtors noted in an email: "Your session was perfect. Thank you! We hope to see you next year in PERSON!!"



WIT@Work Director John Windmueller leads a training session in Improv for Lawyers

WIT@Work offered classes on presentations and improving virtual meetings

In FY20, WIT@Work offered a special workshop on presentations and public speaking, teaching participants how improv skills can lead to successful public speaking engagements, especially in high-stakes situations.

As everyone started shifting meetings online, WIT offered a series of workshops called Improv(e) Your Online Meetings—one-time classes taught by Windmueller designed to help students lead

effective, engaging meetings online through learning the best practices of virtual meetings mixed with the principles of improv.

As people became more accustomed to hosting meetings online, WIT@Work again pivoted to provide more in-depth virtual workshops to help facilitate online meetings with a focus on maximizing fun and engaging in constructive conversations.

Organization

A photograph of two people, a woman on the left and a man on the right, shaking hands. They are both wearing blue and grey futuristic costumes with a small circular logo on the right sleeve. The background is dark with some stage lighting.

Amanda Hahn and Jason Walther in Starship Odyssey

WIT expanded team and put people first

Organizationally, WIT was on track to continue its strong and steady growth, expanding its staff and board, and working to secure a permanent home. Following FY19 revenues exceeding \$1 million for the first time ever, WIT was expecting to once again surpass that milestone, before being impacted by COVID-19.

With the pandemic, WIT made people its No. 1 priority, working to stay focused on the staff, performers, teachers, students, patrons, volunteers, and donors who all make this creative community possible.



Kacie Peterson

Kacie Peterson joins staff in newly created education manager role

In December 2019, WIT brought on Kacie Peterson in the new full-time position of education manager, increasing the education program's capacity. In the role, Peterson administers and fosters the growth of WIT's educational programs, providing an excellent experience for students, instructors, audiences, and artists. The addition of the new full-time position helped increase the education program's capacity—providing more time for engagement with teachers and an increased focus on quality within the classes program.

The addition also grew the staff to five full-time employees and three part-time employees, the largest in WIT's history.

WIT's board grows to record size

In June 2020, WIT's board grew to 23 members, the largest to date. Krystal Ramseur was elected the chairwoman, continuing a trend of diversity in WIT board leadership. WIT's board makeup is 70 percent women and 39 percent people of color.

WIT's development committee recently added two fundraising professionals—Dana Malone Heiser (a longtime improviser and teacher) and Alissa Platz (a WIT student and community member)—as non-board members. They both helped add fundraising capacity and expertise for campaigns devoted to a new space and expanded programming. They join returning non-board committee member Jennie Ellwanger.



Board Members Krystal Ramseur, Graziella Jackson, Goli Samimi, Ehmonie Hailey



WIT opens lobby to protesters

In June, WIT partnered with our landlord CulturalDC and the other resident theater companies at our home space Source to join the Open Your Lobby movement to provide Black Lives Matter protesters with water and food, as well as a safe place to charge their phones and use the restrooms. Nearly 500 people stopped by on the first day of protests to pick up snacks and sunscreen and safely use Source's lobby bathrooms.

Anti-racism work continues

While WIT has worked to advance diversity and equity in our programming, the Black Lives Matter movement has shown us the need for deeper work so that WIT can become anti-racist in every aspect of our organization. With oversight from our board of directors, WIT is conducting an organizational audit of every facet

of our operations—from how we can amplify BIPOC voices on our stage to where we spend our organizational resources. WIT also engaged in research and work to formulate an assessment and an anti-racism action plan, and reached out to community members for support and feedback.

WIT has launched a task force consisting of board and staff members with an aim to deeper examine WIT's operations and plan for next steps.



Cast of iMusical

Contributed revenue swells with growing community support

WIT received large grants from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Events DC

WIT received tremendous grant support in FY20. The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities continued their support of WIT with a general operating support grant award of \$101,000, our largest general operating support grant award ever from the body.

WIT also received a \$150,000 grant from Events DC. While the grant was initially targeted at cultural facilities with a focus on space acquisition and build out, Events DC indicated that the money can now also be used to sustain operations in light of COVID-19.

Sustaining staff and ongoing programming are WIT's ongoing top priority as FY2021 begins, so sacrificing this space support for that cause is a bittersweet but necessary investment.

WIT's donors stepped up for Community Fund, becoming monthly donors

Generous donors from throughout the WIT community made WIT's Community Fund campaign a huge success, enabling WIT to surpass our \$20,000 goal. The funds raised support for WIT's community outreach programming which include youth programs, workshops for various organizations, Improv for All workshops, and our diversity scholarship.



Tom Di Liberto and Vic Whitten of WIT Ensemble Uncle Gorgeous

The number of monthly donors ballooned to 191 people, with many new donors signing up as part of WIT's Fantastic 40 campaign launched during Palooza—as well as a number of new monthly donors stepping up when the pandemic started. This was a 43 percent increase of the number of monthly donors from FY19.

WIT selected to be operator of new space, but COVID-19 brings uncertainty

WIT continued to aggressively pursue an autonomous home theater space dedicated to our community. In fall 2019 WIT was selected by Hoffman & Associates (formerly PN Hoffman) to be the operator of the performing arts space at the forthcoming Waterfront Station II development in Southwest. This brand new space would be located one block north of the Waterfront Metro station on 4th Street near I Street. SW. This selection came after years of searching by WIT, and after WIT made it to the final round of other developments near U Street and Union Market.

Hoffman selected WIT through a competitive RFP process. The 9,000-square-foot space WIT envisions in Southwest includes a Mainstage theater (approx. 120 seats), Studio theater (approx. 50 seats), two flexible use classrooms, backstage and greenroom space, office space, and a front lobby with bar/café.

In the spring of 2020 WIT signed a non-binding Letter of Intent for the space, but has not yet signed a lease. The project is due to break ground in late 2020, and would reach completion in 2023. The COVID-19 pandemic brings some uncertainty around future construction plans, the future of safe public assembly and performance, the overall health of the economy, and the health of DC's philanthropic sector. Nevertheless, we remain very hopeful that we'll find a way forward with this project.

Compass, Bloomberg help increase organizational capacity

WIT continued its partnerships with Compass Consulting and Bloomberg Philanthropies in FY20 to increase organizational capacity. WIT worked with Compass in a year-long engagement to provide recommendations on WIT's marketing practices and web presence. We received a grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies to support the second year of capacity-building seminars with the DeVos Institute of Arts Management.

Financial Update: WIT weathers COVID challenges

WIT was on track to once again bring in revenues at more than \$1 million, with projected revenues of \$1.1 million; however, COVID-19 impacted our budget with a decrease of an estimated \$272,067 revenue loss across all programs.

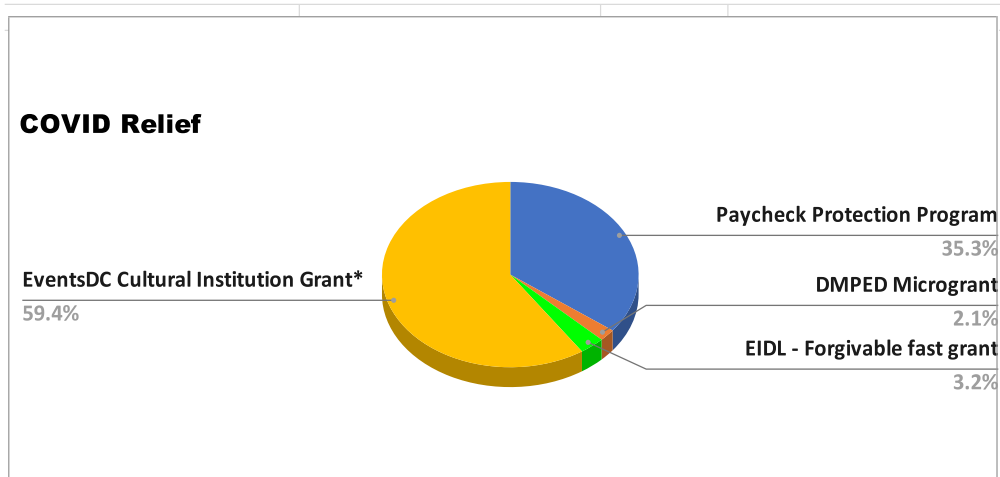
WIT's No. 1 priority was keeping staff on the payroll, although at a reduced 80 percent rate. Staff shifted to a four-day work week (or equivalent). This keeps people connected with their health insurance, keeps the organization functioning, and keeps WIT poised to rebound when we get a signal that we can gather together again.

Since COVID-19, WIT has actively and successfully sought

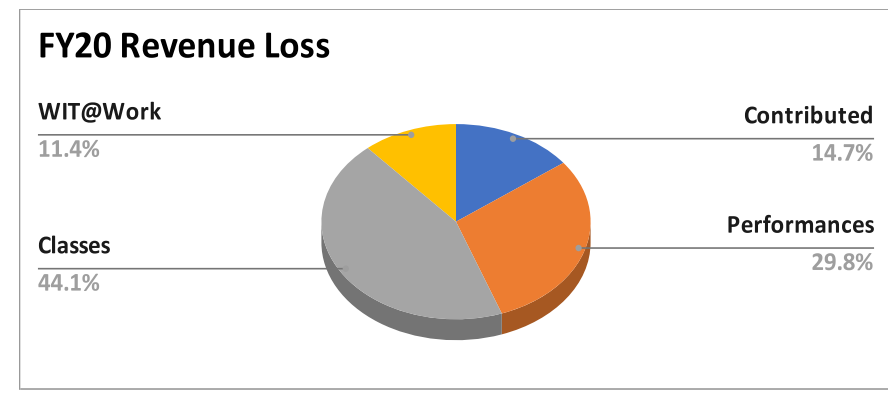
support to buttress its expenses. WIT received a \$89,000 Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan from the Small Business Administration. This forgivable loan helped cover payroll expenses and rent for a 24-week period. WIT has also received a DC Small Business Recovery Microgrant from the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development worth more than \$5,000.

When the pandemic began, the executive and finance committees of WIT's board started meeting every two weeks to help WIT navigate decisions for programming and finances. The finance committee helped staff plan a budget using a three-month rolling budget model, a more flexible model that is new to the organization.

WIT has also prioritized teaching opportunities for those teachers who are in the greatest fiscal need.



COVID Relief		
Paycheck Protection Program	\$	89,095
DMPED Microgrant	\$	5,283
EIDL - Forgivable fast grant	\$	8,000
EventsDC Cultural Institution Grant*	\$	150,000
TOTAL	\$	252,378



FY20 Revenue Loss	
Contributed	\$ 40,000
Performances	\$ 81,000
Classes	\$ 120,067
WIT@Work	\$ 31,000
TOTAL Losses (est.)	\$272,067



People

Ensemble performers and directors

Adam Levine, Bam Alston, Beth Lyons, Brianna Lux, Caroline Chen, Cassie Barnum, Chris Ulrich, Clare Mulligan, Dan Miller, Dan Milliken, Darnell Eaton, Donna Steele, Elaine Cowell, Erin McGuire, Erin Murray, Geoff Corey, Jamal Newman, Jasmine Jiang, Jenna Hall, Jo Scott, Joey Breems, John Heiser, Jordana Mishory, Justine Hipsky, Kaelan Sullivan, Kelsey Peters, Kenny Park Yi, Kristina Martinez, Krystal Ramseur, Liz Sanders, Lura Barber, Macy Schiff, Margaret Lee, Maria Gahan, Marissa Chaffee, Mark Chalfant, Matt Berman, Matt Winterhalter, Michael O'Connor, Molly Graham, Molly Murchie, Neil Baron, Nina Hsu, Olivia Martinez, Patrick Fleury, Patrick Slevin, Ryan Brookshire, Saleh Karaman, Sean Paul Ellis, Simone Webster, Slli'm Williams, Stacey Axler, Tara Demmy, Tom Di Liberto, Travis Charles Ploeger, Vic Whitten, Yael Rothman

Harold Team players and coaches

Allison Yolo, Adriana Usero, Adrienne Picciotto, Al-Hassan Koroma, Alex Waddell, Alexandra Tucci, Allison Yolo, Amanda Fulton, Amanda Hahn, Andrea Quach, Andrew Dickinson, Angela Karpieniak, Anna Ross, Anuj Christian, Aravind Sreenath, Aubrey Peterson, Béatrice Leydier, Ben Taylor, Bethany Stokes, Bill Nelson, Bizzy Fain, Brady Peters, Brent Buxton, Brianna Rooney, Cara Popecki, Chris Lewitzke, Chris Orvin, Chris Westfall, Dave Johnson, David Shadburn, Dennis Pangindian, Eli Okun, Elizabeth Cutler, Elizabeth Mulkey, Erick Acuña, Ginnie Seger, Hawk Haines, Heather Marie Vitale, Henry Ring, Isabelle Solomon, Jack Lewis, Jamal Newman, James Jelin, James Paul, Jason Re, Jeff Friedman, John Wambach, JoJo Franzen, Joshua Rachford, Julia Zhen, Justin Carty, Kaelan Sullivan, Kalynn Chambers, Kara Kinsey, Karyn Wilson, Katie Munn, Kelsey Peters, Kenny Park Yi, Kristen Timko, Lauren Cross, Lauren

Oona MacDougall and Amanda Fulton of Harold Team Hudson



Gabel, Lauren Jordan, Leah Donnella, Lori Pitts, Madeline Black, Maria Gahan, Maria Halloran, Mark Abman, Mark Benjamin, Mark Powell, Matt Coit, Matt Strote, Max Holtz, Max Makovetsky, Meaghan Griffith, Meredith Garagiola, Mikail Faalasli, Molly Graham, Morgan Smalley, Natalia Antas, Nick Martinez, Olivia Martinez, Oona MacDougall, Rachel Lang, Raymond Simeon, Rosemary Grant, Ryan Brookshire, Samantha Watson, Sarah Wilson, Sean Rossman, Slli'm Williams, Stacey Axler, Stephanie Wilson, Steve Karig, Svend Larsen, Tandra Turner, Taylor Kniffin, Tess Higgins, Tom Di Liberto, Turner Meeks, Vic Whitten, Zhi Bo Deng

Featured Ensemble players

Adam Koussari-Amin, Alex Waddell, Analía Gómez Vidal, Bam Alston, Ben Taylor, Bryce Slinger, Caroline Chen, Ceci De Robertis, Christina Floriza, Darnell Eaton, David Brescia-Weiler, Denny Johnson, Derek Hayes, Michael Hendrix, Erica Johnson, Erick Acuña, Eva Lewis, Ginnie Seger, Heather Marie Vitale, J.J. Jackson, Jamal Newman, Jared Smith, Jason Walther, Jessica Norman, Jonathan Murphy, Jordana Mishory, Justin Carty, Kate Symes, Kelsey Peters, Kristina Martinez, Krystal Ramseur, Lauren Woody, Margaret Lee, Mary Lauran Hall, Michael Hendrix, Mikey Blunski, Neil Baron, Nic Small, Nina Hsu, Richie Khanh, Ryan Krull, Saleh Karaman, Shealy Molpus, Slli'm Williams, Tom Di Liberto

Special project cast, directors, and crew

Adrienne Picciotto, Aimee Lee Savage, Alan McCombs, Alex Kazanas, Alex Taliaferro, Alex Waddell, Amanda Fulton, Amanda Hahn, Analía Gómez Vidal, Andrea Quach, Angela Karpiniak, Anna Cooper, Bam Alston, Bill Nelson, Cara Popecki, Cassie Barnum, Christina Floriza, Clare Mulligan, Clarissa Zies, Clyde Thompson, Colin Murchie, Dan O'Neil, Darnell Eaton, Denny Johnson, Derek Hayes, Donna Steele, Ehmonie Hainey, Elizabeth Busby, Elizabeth Fulton, Erica Johnson, Erin Murray, Erin Smith, Eva Lewis, Geoff Corey, Harold Young, Heather Moyer, Isabelle Solomon, Iulia Gheorghiu, Jamal Newman, Jane White, Jason Herbert, Jason Walther, Jeff Bollen, Jenna Hall, Jennifer Hyman, Jessica Norman, Jessica Szmajda, Joe Randazzo, John Heiser, Jonathan Murphy, Jordana Mishory, Jules Duffy, Julia Zhen, Karyn Wilson, Katie Lazo, Keenan Gibson, Kelsey Peters, Krystal Ramseur, Lauren Jordan, Lauren Woody, Lee Bennett, Liz Sanders, Lori Pitts, Luke Hennig, Lura Barber, Maddox Pennington, Marandah Field-Elliott, Matt Berman, Mikey Blunski, Molly Murchie, Namakau Lewanika, Natalie Knazik, Nic Small, Nichole Hill, Precious Jenkins, Rasheed Green, Raymond Simeon, Saleh Karaman, Sam Schifrin, Shawn Banks, Simone Webster, Slli'm Williams, Sofia Javed, Tamara Cavell-Allette, Tandra Turner, Ti Coleman, Tonya Jordan, Vic Whitten, Zach Mason

Jeff Bollen, Alex Kazanas, and Jonathan Murphy from Starship Odyssey



Joe Randazzo, Isabelle Solomon, Clarissa Zies, Alex Waddell, and John Heiser from The Heist





**Mark Powell and Al-Hassan Koroma
of Harold Team Lava Kids**

Teaching artists

Adam Levine, Alan Prunier, Alex Waddell, Annie Barry, Anuj Christian, Ashley Siebels, Bam Alston, Ben Taylor, Bianca Casusol, Brandon Zelman, Nicholas Guastella, Cara Popecki, Caroline Howe, Ceci De Robertis, Dan Brown, Darnell Eaton, Dave Johnson, Devin Horne, Donna Steele, Eileen Breslin, Elizabeth Fulton, Em Fiske, Erick Acuña, Erin Murray, Eva Lewis, Greg Tindale, Heather Marie Vitale, Jack Novak, James Jelin, Jason Walther, John Heiser, John Roller, John Windmueller, Jonathan Murphy, Jordana Mishory, Justin Carty, Justine Hipsky, Karyn Wilson, Kate Symes, Kelsey Peters, Krystal Ramseur, Lauren Gabel, Liz Sanders, Luke Hennig, Lura Barber, Macey Schiff, Mark Chalfant, Martin Steger, Matthew Gibeson, Megan Gray, Mike Funt, Molly Graham, Mona Thompson, Natalia Kaye, Nina Hsu, Olivia Martinez, Patrick Fleury, Paul Hitlin, Pete Bergen, Raymond Simeon, Robin Doody, Ryan Brookshire, Sabrina Shahmir, Saleh Karaman, Sam Schifrin, Samantha Watson, Sarah Leibach, Serena Bethala, Tara Demmy, Zach Mason



WIT students



**Ginnie Seger and Allison Yolo
of Harold team Ruth**

WIT@Work trainers

Bryan Jackson, Cara Popecki, Dan Brown, Dan Miller, Dave Johnson, Jaci Pulice, John Windmueller, Jordana Mishory, Julia D'Ambrosi, Karen Lange, Karyn Wilson, Katie Ozog, Lura Barber, Mark Chalfant, Molly Graham, Mona Thompson, Raymond Simeon, Steve Major



Marandah Field-Elliott in The Feminine Experience



Harold Team Semiprecious



Beth Lyons and Molly Graham of iMusical

Volunteers, booth operators, and front of house staff

Aakash Shah, Alex Waddell, Alim Wright, Allison Shaw, Alyssa Liguori, Amanda Fulton, Amanda Hahn, Anderson Molina, Anna Cooper, Anuj Christian, Ashley Siebels, Aviva Loeb, Ben Meguira, Ben Royer, Bethany Stokes, Bizzy Fain, Brad Ludlow, Brian Callahan, Briana Humphrey, Bryanda Minix, Caroline Howe, Cate Minichino, Cate Pierson, Chanelle Gutari, Chris Lewitzke, Christina Ferrari, Christina Mallris, Colleen Ryan, Conor Halloran, Court McGrew, Courtney Chinn, Dane St. Clair, Danish Jawaid, David Shadburn, Djuan Pritchett, Eileen Breslin, Elise Buckley, Elizabeth Busby, Elizabeth Fulton, Elizabeth Leff, Erica Lebherz, Erin Falvey, Erin Smith, Genevieve Kelly, Grace Champion, Grace Chou, Grisel Saez, Heather Marie Vitale, Helena Rother, Hibba Meraay, Isabelle Solomon, Jane White, Jarrett Lee, Jeff Hewitt, Jeff Salmore, Jessica Lowder, Jillian Misner, Joey Scully, Jovon Durham, Judy Oyedele, Julia Gagnon, Justin Carty, Karyn Wilson, Kathleen Kiernan, Kelsie Anderson, Kristen Timko, Lauren Gabel, Lauren Jordan, Lia Kuduk, Lisa Schreihart, Maddie Black, Marie Iwaniuk, Matt Coit, Megan Smith, Meghna

Mazumder, Michael Fryar, Morgan Flitt, Namakau Lewanika, Nathan Naimark, Nichole Hill, Olivia D'Aoust, Olivia Martinez, Oona MacDougall, Pete Hanner, Philip Schwartz, Precious Jenkins, Raymond Simeon, Rhiannon Vaughn, Ryan McClure, Saleh Karaman, Sally Murray, Samantha Watson, Sarah Cottrill, Sarah Evans, Sarah Spell, Sawa Kamara, Schuyler Atkins, Sean McGrath, Shea Minter, Simone Webster, Spencer Orenstein, Stephen Gabauer, Susan Jacob, Svend Larsen, Tandra Turner, Ted Blanton, Tess Higgins, Tracy Ford, Tucker Kibbey, Turner Meeks, Victoria Bourret, Zach Berger, Zartosht Ahlers

Improvapalooza 2019 Planning Team

Allison Shaw, Clare Mulligan, Heather Marie Vitale, Kelsey Peters, Sarah Armstrong, Spencer Orenstein, Susan Jacob, Svend Larsen, Taylor Kniffin

Thanks to:

Alex Kazanas, Bloomberg Philanthropies, CentroNia, Compass Consulting, DC Arts Center, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Events DC, Jeff Salmore, KRPR, Latin American Youth Center, Ryan McClure, Spooky Action Theater, Studio 1469

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Béatrice Leydier, Geoffrey Corey, Jeffrey Waggett, Krystal Ramseur, Mark Caffee, Michael Hendrix

Compatriots (\$480 and up)

Aaron Mosby, Cicie Sattarnilasskorn, Goli Samimi, Mark Chalfant, Oxana Holtmann, Sarah Caffee, Stuart Bloch

Allies (\$120 and up)

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Matt Winterhalter and Saleh Karaman of Nox!

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WIT Ensemble Madeline

WIT's Mission

To engage audiences with performances that exhilarate and inspire. To ignite the spirit of play in Washington with a revolutionary training program. To create a home for improv, connected to the life of the city.

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Artistic/Executive Director

Dan Miller

External Relations Director

Jonathan Murphy

Education Director

Kacie Peterson

Education Manager

John Windmueller

WIT@Work Director

Jordana Mishory

Operations Manager

Raymond Simeon

Production Manager

Molly Murchie

Marketing Associate

Kelly Matthews

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Interns

Liz Brodie

Eli Kaplan

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Joining in FY21: Lura Barber, Hilary Joel, Sharon E. Klotz, Naib Mobassir, Sean Rossman, Rebecca Roy

Photos by Richie Downes, Mikail Faalasli, Allison Freed, Benjamin McKnight, and Jeff Salmore. Design by LaDonna Duncan.

Jenna Hall and Simone Webster of Hellcat

