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USDAN SUMMER CAMP FOR THE ARTS ANNOUNCES THE FESTIVAL LINE-UP FOR ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Artistic Director Jonathan Shmidt Chapman Partnered with First-Ever Camper Curatorial Council to Make Final Selection for the Prestigious Performance Program

NEW YORK, NY (June 2018) – Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts (www.usdan.org), one of the pre-eminent nonprofit arts day camps in the country, today announced the Festival line-up for its 50th Anniversary Season – which kicks off on June 26. Curated by Usdan’s recently appointed Artistic Director **Jonathan Shmidt Chapman**, in partnership with Usdan students on the first-ever Camper Curatorial Council, the 2018 program consists of student performances as well as 14 different professional acts, representing genres from classical music and dance to poetry, musical theatre, and comedy.

The 2018 Festival Program¹ includes:

- June 26 [The Joelle Lurie Quartet](#)
- June 27 [Limon Dance Company](#)
- June 28 [Mayhem Poets](#)
- June 29 [Sole Defined](#)
- July 2 [Mariachi Flor De Toloache](#)
- July 6 [Parallel Exit](#)
- July 10 *Wheels of a Dream: Broadway's* [Douglas Lyons](#) and [Danyel Fulton](#)
- July 13 [Sol y Sombra](#)
- July 16 *Voices of Broadway:* [Laura Osnes](#), [Adam Kaplan](#), and [Mat Eisenstein](#)
- July 19 [The Chameleons](#)
- July 23 [Akropolis Reed Quintet](#)
- July 27 [The Blue Eyed Bettys](#)
- July 31 [Project Trio](#)
- August 8 [Ballet Next](#)

The annual Festival Program is a signature facet of the Usdan experience. In addition to featuring student performances, it invites distinguished artists from a range of disciplines for private performances in the McKinley Amphitheater throughout the summer. Over the last 50 years, well-known and emerging artists have graced the stage on campus including singer Jane Monheit, the Tokyo String Quartet, Puppet Kitchen, musician Lisa Bielawa, Pilobolus, the Martha Graham Dance Company, and jazz legend Jimmy Heath as well as countless cast members from Broadway shows

¹ Program subject to change

including *Shrek*, *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*, *Wicked*, *Mamma Mia*, *Anything Goes*, and more.

“Usdan’s annual Festival program continues to be a wonderful way to cultivate creativity and support a two-way exchange between established and young artists,” says Lauren Brandt Schloss, Executive Director of Usdan. “Over the course of the summer, Usdan students have the unique opportunity to both present and receive art. In their classes, they make work and start to find their voices. During Festival performances, students get to hear what others have to say and use that to further hone their perspective. That creative dialogue is one that we hope students will continue to foster and embrace throughout their lives — in all of their endeavors.”

To help identify the top choices for this year’s program, the newly-minted Usdan Festival Artistic Director Jonathan Shmidt Chapman enlisted a group of Usdan campers—the first-ever Camper Curatorial Council—to weigh in on a short list of 25 artists, companies, and ensembles who were being considered for the 2018 Festival docket. The campers, representing a range of ages and artistic disciplines, met over the winter, to learn more about artistic programming and debate about what makes a piece of art excellent. From those initial conversations, the students highlighted their own personal favorite performances to help cull the list down to the final docket.

“While many theaters and arts organizations across the country program shows for children and family audiences, young people rarely have a seat at the table in choosing this programming or getting the chance to offer their own opinion in the process,” says Jonathan Shmidt Chapman. “With the Camper Curatorial Council, Usdan is forging a new model for fully engaging young people – not just as audience members – with agency in their own arts experiences, incorporating their voices, ideas and experiences.”

All performances will be presented to campers in the McKinley Amphitheater and videotaped for posterity. Select excerpts will be made available on Usdan’s YouTube channel and on its social media channels. For more artist bios, photographs and more information, go to www.usdan.org.

About Jonathan Shmidt Chapman

Artist, producer, and curator **Jonathan Shmidt Chapman** previously served as the first Producer of Family Programming at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, launching a new programming initiative for young audiences, and creating ways to reimagine the Lincoln Center campus as an international arts destination for families. Currently, he is the Executive Director of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA (TYA/USA), a national nonprofit dedicated to providing professional development and resources to artists, theaters, and university programs focused on performing arts for youth. He is also the co-founder of New York’s acclaimed Trusty Sidekick Theater Company, leading the

company through five years of growth and the creation of 12 original works, including the critically-acclaimed *Up and Away* (a multi-sensory, immersive experience for young people on the autism spectrum). Recent artistic credits include co-creator of *The Cerulean Time Capsule* for the Kennedy Center, and director of the world premiere of *The Boy at the Edge of Everything* (Finegan Kruckemeyer) at Seattle Children's Theatre. Jonathan has held artistic and education-focused roles at The New Victory Theater, True Colors Youth Theatre, and the Cloud Foundation. He serves as an adjunct faculty member at New York University, where he teaches Theatre for Young Audiences.

About Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2018, Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts (usdan.org) is the nation's preeminent not-for-profit day camp for the arts and has been named a "Best Of" camp by *TimeOutNY/Kids*, and by *NY Metro Parents*. Diverse and playfully rigorous from the start, for fifty years, we have brought world-class teachers and visiting artists – actors, directors, playwrights, painters, sculptors, musicians, composers, dancers, poets and novelists – to teach and collaborate with Usdan campers ages 4 to 18. Usdan ignites each child's artistic spirit in a fun, welcoming environment. We believe art making is brave making, friend making, freedom making and future making.

Usdan is an agency of the UJA-Federation of New York. All programs will take place at the camp's magnificent 140-acre woodland campus, located at 185 Colonial Springs Road in Wheatley Heights, NY 11798.

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