

Press Release

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The 20th Annual ARTS SENSATION! A Benefit Performance for Plastic Ocean Project

7:30 p.m. April 26, 2024
Thalian Hall Main Stage
310 Chestnut Street
Wilmington, NC 28401



Tickets are \$25 general admission. Please contact the Thalian Hall Box Office at 910.632.2285 or online for ticket reservations.

The 20th Annual Arts Sensation returns to the Thalian Hall Main Stage to showcase lively and entertaining local talent for a music and dance spectacular! This year's beneficiary is Plastic Ocean Project, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based out of Wilmington, NC, whose mission is to attain science-based solutions to the plastic pollution crisis that inspire all to make informed choices to improve human and environmental health. With a vision of a world free of plastic pollution, POP works with storytellers, artists, writers, and film-makers to communicate issues to a wider audience, conduct scientific research to learn about plastic pollution, find solutions, and educate others to implement science-based solutions through collaborations with fellow scientists, stakeholders, businesses, and political leaders.

Musical entertainment is by singer and songwriter Ava Johnson from Wilmington, NC. She performs throughout eastern North Carolina and recently was in France at several clubs on Jazz Row (Rue des Lombards) in Paris and in the Bordeaux region. Ava grew up training in voice and piano and began releasing her own music in 2018. Her influences include Nina Simone, Norah Jones, Adele, Alicia Keys, Amy Winehouse, Rufus Wainwright and Rhiannon Giddens.

Arts Sensation also brings a deluge of dance creations from many genres. Dancers from the amazing Dance Theatre for All bring their piece "Shadow and Light". Kelly Hawes (as Samra) returns to share her awesome belly dancing talents. A premiere classical solo is choreographed and danced by Madeleine Pautier. Choreographer and dancer Emily Lawler will present a modern-contemporary quartet. High-energy Jazz dance, set to music composed by Annie Lennox and performed by Whitney Houston, comes from choreographer Tracey Varga. Dance Theatre of DREAMS will perform two powerful and thought provoking pieces choreographed by Kevin Lee-Y Green, "Class of ..." and "The Love That Forgives". And with their fine style, the

captivating Company “T” Tap Dancers, choreographed by Tracey Varga, return to wow audiences with their vintage flair. A special presentation of the unique and historic Thunder Roll and Rain Machine showcases these special effects, built right into the Thalian Hall stage, that were innovative and thrilling in their time.



Now presenting its 20th performance, Arts Sensation began in 2001, created by Tracey Varga and produced each year by Forward Motion Dance Company with the intent to bring local musicians and dance artists together to share their vast talents in a variety of genres with the Wilmington community while

fundraising and bringing awareness about the great work and services local non-profits provide for humanitarian and environmental causes in the area and abroad. The first Arts Sensation was held at City Stage, and past recipients include the Food Bank of Coastal Carolina, Domestic Violence Shelter and Services, Good Shepherd Center, The Full Belly Project, Indo-Jax Surf School, The Arts Council of Wilmington and New Hanover County, Kids Making It, Cape Fear River Watch, WARM, and the Lower Cape Fear Hospice. We are thrilled to have Plastic Ocean Project as our benefactor for our 20th event. For more information, please visit Plastic Ocean Project at plasticoceanproject.org and us on Facebook or at forwardmotiondance.org.

