



Contact: Amanda Kingsbury, Arts Council of Indianapolis
akingsbury@indyarts.org and 317-258-3649 mobile (text or call)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan. 14, 2021

Art & Soul celebrates 25 years of showcasing Black art and music in Indy

Arts Council teams up with WISH-TV to present 2021 festival online due to COVID-19 precautions

INDIANAPOLIS – Since 1996, Art & Soul has kicked off Black History Month in Indianapolis and helped expand the city’s awareness and appreciation of African-American art and music. In February, the Arts Council of Indianapolis and WISH-TV will team up to present “Art & Soul: Black by Popular Demand,” a special, month-long 25th-anniversary edition of the community program.

Traditionally, Art & Soul, the Arts Council’s largest public program, attracts more than 2,000 visitors to the Indianapolis Artsgarden to celebrate central Indiana-based Black artists who create traditional, classical, and contemporary rhythms, movements, textures, and colors. This year, the festival, supported annually by Lilly Endowment Inc., will move to a virtual broadcast and online format in partnership with WISH-TV due to ongoing COVID-19 health and safety concerns. Highlights will include shows by the four Featured Artists and performances by 12 musical acts. The Arts Council partnered with Indy Jazz Fest and the Asante Art Institute of Indianapolis to develop this year’s program.

“Art & Soul is like having an annual Black arts family reunion each year,” said Ernest Disney-Britton, Vice President of Community Impact & Investment at the Arts Council. “It’s more than a series of concerts. It’s 28 days of family time with your favorites. We won’t be in person this year, but this virtual experience will still connect us to incredible musical talent, and make us even more excited about being together again next year.”

In February, WISH-TV will present highlights of all 16 performances at www.IndyArtandSoul.com. (The site, which will go live later this month, will also feature news coverage and Indy Style segments highlighting the artists.) Fans of Art & Soul will also be able to enjoy full 45-minute performances in February on the Arts Council’s [website](http://www.arts-council.org). A complete schedule of events will be available later in January.

“We’re very proud of the partnership between WISH-TV and the Arts Council of Indianapolis to broadcast these special performances and help spotlight local African-American art and music,” said DuJuan McCoy, owner, president, and CEO of Circle City Broadcasting (parent company of WISH-TV). “WISH-TV is committed to providing more, local programming and content for our Central Indiana viewers”

Over the past 25 years, Art & Soul has helped launch the careers of emerging Black artists in central Indiana. Four Featured Artists are selected annually to be spotlighted throughout the month. This year's artists include:

- **AshLee “PsyWrn Simone” Baskin**, a vocalist, songwriter, lyricist, poet/spoken word artist, actress, and teaching artist who is guided by Nina Simone’s words, “An artist’s duty...is to reflect the times.”
- **Matthew Cooper**, a self-taught visual artist who studied drawing and Africana studies at the IUPUI Herron School of Art and Design. He reads as much as he can about a subject before he re-creates it on canvas: “I want to give life once again to our untold history.”
- **Yadin Kol**, a self-taught guitarist, singer, and songwriter whose conscious-stirring lyrics come from his southern roots and urban life experiences. His debut EP will be released this year.
- **Christopher Pitts**, a pianist who connects jazz piano traditions with the modern ear through energetic performance, thoughtful collaboration, and aesthetic compositions.

The four Featured Artists also receive professional development coaching from communications experts at Herd Strategies and Borshoff along with a session on grant opportunities with local grantmakers.

To mark the 25th-anniversary celebration, the Arts Council is asking community members to share their photos and memories of attending Art & Soul by emailing indyarts@indyarts.org.

###

[The Arts Council of Indianapolis](#) fosters meaningful engagement in the arts by nurturing a culture where artists and arts organizations can thrive. Read the Arts Council’s Equity Statement [here](#).