

Press Contact: Ross Wixon
rwixon@revelsdc.org
(202) 253-0449
www.revelsdc.org / @revelsdc



For Immediate Release

Washington Revels Caps Virtual “Season of Reveling” with *Winter Solstice Revels*

Glen Echo, MD, December 8, 2020 – In December, Washington Revels would normally be in the final stretch of preparations for its annual *Christmas Revels* production — but in the face of COVID restrictions on live theatre, this longstanding DC performance community has turned adversity into opportunity with an ambitious virtual **“Season of Reveling”** that celebrates fall holidays at home.

For 37 years, Washington Revels has drawn 10,000 Washingtonians annually to GW Lisner Auditorium for ***The Christmas Revels***, a fully staged celebration of the Winter Solstice. So, when the 38th annual production had to be canceled, Revels adapted to the moment, applying the interactive digital programming it honed early in the pandemic to expand the scope of its fall production. The resulting four-month series, “A Season of Reveling,” created a platform to share how friends and neighbors are marking important fall holidays from many traditions and cultures while at home.

From Autumnal Equinox in September to the upcoming *Winter Solstice Revels* on December 20, “A Season of Reveling” has spotlighted community features on: the Jewish High Holidays and *Sukkot*; the Japanese *Tsukimi* Harvest Moon Festival; a virtual Maryland Emancipation Day performance; and the Mexican holiday *Dia de los Muertos*. Signature live and pre-recorded events and performances have included a klezmer concert for *Simchat Torah*, a rousing *Oktoberfest Pub Sing*, and a special video performance for *Mawlid an Nabawi* (The Prophet’s Birthday).

“Since we can’t be together in a theater, we chose our theme for ‘A Season of Reveling’ as ‘Hearth & Home,’ both literally and figuratively,” says **Artistic Director Roberta Gasbarre**. “We want to celebrate how families create traditions to mark the holidays and events throughout the year, as we always do, but this year creating our circle of Reveling in a virtual world. In some ways, this has allowed us to open up our creative process to a wider group of our Revels community through events like ‘Jubilee July,’ the Daily Antidote of Song, the ‘Revels Book of Days,’ and, now, with a brand-new *Winter Solstice Revels*. In a wonderful way, Revels is amplifying traditions that we would never have time to touch on during the busy run-up to *The Christmas Revels*, and this is empowering our community to bring forward aspects of their lives and cultures that have always made Washington Revels so vibrant, but that might never have fit within the frame of that production.”

For **Reveler Mari Parker**, the experience was indeed a powerful one: “When I was asked to share *Tsukimi*, or Harvest Moon Viewing, with the Revels community, I had no idea what I was getting into but I was enthusiastic about sharing one of my favorite childhood traditions. The excitement of preparing the *Tsukimi* project played a huge part in bringing together and uniting the three generations of our family, who happened to be sheltering together at the time of the project, into one spirit. Around the world, the role of traditional celebrations has been to share joy and knit families and communities closer together, but I had never felt it as strongly as I did this time, when I shared *Tsukimi* from my childhood in Japan with my own family here in America and then with the Revels Community.”

The highlight of “A Season of Reveling” is the [***Winter Solstice Revels***](#) on December 20th at 7 PM. This live seasonal event will bring treasured traditions from the past 37 *Christmas Revels* online with **carols and Revels singalongs**, performances by the virtual **Adult, Teen and Children’s Choruses**, the cheerful sound of the **Washington Revels Brass**, and a stunning rendition of the spiritual “**My Lord, What a Mornin’**” by the **Washington Revels Jubilee Voices**.

Guest performances on December 20 include a 2020 winter play by multi-time Helen Hayes Award-recipients — and longtime Washington Revels friends — **Happenstance Theater**, and the mysterious and ancient **Abbots Bromley Horn Dance**, brought to life by the **Rock Creek Morris and Foggy Bottom Morris Dancers**.

“Season of Reveling” events leading up to the *Winter Solstice Revels* include a [**live Chanukkah \(menorah\) lighting**](#) series from December 10-17, and a [**Sankta Lucia Festival**](#) on December 13 featuring children from Revels’ virtual workshops with local Scandinavian music specialists **Andrea Hoag, Loretta Kelly and Charlie Pilzer**.

Founded in 1983, Washington Revels is a multi-generational performing arts community of professionals and nonprofessionals that presents traditional music, dance, storytelling, and drama in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. It includes four performing ensembles — Gallery Voices, Heritage Voices, Jubilee Voices, and Maritime Voices — and produces after-school workshops, community participation events like the virtual [**Daily Antidote of Song**](#), service events, and performances year round, including *May Revels* each spring and *The Christmas Revels* each December

A Season of Reveling

Fall Holidays from Many Traditions
Virtual Concerts, Videos & Activities
Online at www.revelsdc.org/season

Winter Solstice Revels

Premieres Sunday, December 20 at 7:00 PM,
with on-demand access from Dec. 23-Jan. 6
On-demand access can be bought thru Jan. 6
Tickets at <https://bit.ly/solstice-revels>

Winter Solstice Revels tickets allow households to watch and participate on a shared device and include post-event access through January 6 (*Twelfth Night*): perfect for those who can’t attend on December 20th, or who want to relive the joyful experience over the holiday season. On-demand access is also available for purchase anytime after the live premiere on December 20 until January 6.

Washington Revels is supported in part by funding from the Montgomery County Government and the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County and in part by the Maryland State Arts Council (msac.org).