

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



For Immediate Release

Washington Revels Continues Building Community for DC in the Face of COVID-19
Free Daily Sing-Alongs and Service Projects Connect across Social Distancing

Silver Spring, MD, April 30, 2020 – To ease the burden of self-isolation restrictions, Washington Revels is carrying out its mission to “create community through celebration” by redesigning programs for video conferencing. The 35-year-old DC performing arts community’s offerings are built on active participation. Two-way interaction of audience members with Washington Revels’ performers and with each other is a key element that draws people to Revels events, and it is something that Revels has worked to preserve even as the pandemic has forced the performing arts online.

As Executive Director Greg Lewis says, “The impact of a Revels program is the shared experience with people of all ages and backgrounds coming together to sing, dance, share stories, and feel connected. So as COVID-19 forced us to look at other options for offering programs, one-way videos of performances didn’t seem like enough. At Revels we want to connect people with people. And since we couldn’t bring people together physically, video conferencing was really the only way to go.”

Washington Revels has launched a new program designed specifically with video conferencing in mind: **Daily Antidotes of Song** connects people at noon each day for a song led by a guest artist. “There’s nothing that can replace singing together in the same room,” says Revels Community Engagement Director Jo Rasi. “But even though participants have to mute themselves in order to sing along with the song leaders, that feeling of connection, of seeing the faces of people singing with you, has been powerful for all involved.” Daily Antidotes of Song not only serves DC-area residents, but has also attracted participants and artists from around the world, including folksinger Peggy Seeger (England), piano/fiddle duo Elvie Miller and Dennis Liddy (Ireland) and Nicholas Williams of the French-Canadian band Genticorum.

Revels has shifted several of its regular programs online as well, including the monthly **Carpe Diem Arts-Washington Revels Community Sing**, which expanded into a virtual Earth Day Festival during the month of April. Revels has also continued chorus rehearsals and spring after-school workshops via video meetings. Even its monthly **Day of Service** program has continued remotely as volunteers make “Thank You” cards for healthcare workers, with the option to video chat with each other while crafting.

To move several activities online quickly, the Revels staff has remained open to experimentation and has been proactive about asking participants for feedback and suggestions, even from the youngest participants. Longtime after-school workshop teaching artist Christine Alexander notes, “I’m thrilled to be getting ideas from our students as we invent new ways of ‘reveling’ together from our homes. We’re being creative when it comes to learning new songs, crafting, playing, and storytelling.” From

reimagining children's classes to bringing people together across distance with song, Revels is helping the DC region grow in new ways as a community during the pandemic.

Upcoming virtual events include the Daily Antidotes of Song (12 noon EDT); the monthly Community Sing on May 21 (and on the 21st of every month); and Day of Service — now “Month” of Service during the remote card-making project in May. These online programs will continue until it is safe to gather in person again. Participation is free, and more details are at www.RevelsDC.org.

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 produces after-school workshops, community participation events, and performances year round, including *May Revels* each spring and *The Christmas Revels* each December.