



For immediate release

Wac Arts, an inclusive hothouse for creativity, turns 40.

Wac Arts celebrates 40 years of empowering young people to change their world through the arts. The celebration involves a weekend festival of inclusive arts activity and a show, directed by Ché Walker (the writer behind UK Netflix's hit *Been So Long*), performed by the graduating class of 2019.



To celebrate its 40th anniversary, **Wac Arts** is opening its doors. The charity has a rich history of supporting marginalised young people and has made Hampstead's **Old Town Hall**, with its rich history of social activism, its home. **Suffragettes** stood and rallied support, **Lord Pitt** gave an anti-racism speech and the **Nigerian Women's League** held their first dance at The Old Town Hall. The **Scratch Test Orchestra** and **Madness** played their first gigs at the hall, and, in the 70's, it was the place where the **Gay Liberation Front** held a disco, cementing Hampstead



as a place that actively supports LGBTQ+ rights. Wac Arts have built on this history to continue to support those who find it hard to participate in the arts.

'I can't express enough that if it wasn't for Wac Arts I wouldn't be where I am today. I owe it my whole career. Coming from my sort of background it's near on impossible to find any sort of avenue to pursue the art that we love' says ex-student and Eastenders' star, **Danny Dyer**.

Wac Arts present an 3-day festival of arts and events celebrating the rich heritage of change-makers who made history at the Old Town Hall. In keeping with a long and vital advocacy of marginalised people and change, the graduating musical theatre students will perform *In The Heights* at the Platform Theatre (6 - 7 July). *The We Are Wac Arts* (WAWA) Weekender festival will be held from 26 – 28 July. The public are invited to take part in discussions, workshops, performances and parties; allowing audiences and participants to explore, discover and celebrate the London Arts scene.

At the WAWA Weekender there will be many free events, from family activities to professional development workshops for emerging artists, as well as a participatory show curated by young people with disabilities that uses interactive technology developed at Wac Arts. Highlights also include; a late night party to celebrate Hampstead Town Hall's place in the history of supporting and celebrating the LGBTQ+ movement, with a DJ set by **Ana Matronic** (Scissor Sisters) and cabaret acts including; **Dolly Trolly Drag** and **London Gay Men's Chorus** and a special edition of **Ché Walkers'** Revolution, a show comprised of multiple acts from artists across different performing arts disciplines. Past acts have included; Olivier Award Winner Sheila Atim MBE, Hamilton lead Jamael Westman, OMAR, Danny Dyer, Simon Callow and Akala.

Join Wac Arts to celebrate the catalysts for change that have gone before, and inspire the change-makers of the future. For more information go to: www.wacarts.co.uk/weekender

Image credit: Nathan Greenwood

-ENDS-

Press contact Lindsey Pugh (Producer), Ché Walker, Patience James, Patrick McGough (Para Dance) are all available for interview. Please contact Grace Nicol projects@uprightfools.com 07585331590

Images:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12DQ11jsQgHb3FQ0nG0YrLCqkkwWqc-vj?usp=sharing>

Listings



In the Heights

DATES: 6th - 7th July

TIMES: 6th July (2pm & 7pm) 7th July (5pm)

WHERE: Platform Theatre, Hornsey Road Baths, 2 Tiltman Place (off Hornsey Road), London, N7 7EE

COST: £5 - £10

TICKETS: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/in-the-heights-tickets-62136870051>

Age restriction: 14+

COPY: Wac Arts Diploma students perform their graduate production, In the Heights, a vibrant and gritty musical set in New York City. This summer production is directed by Writer and Director Ché Walker. Ché Walker is the multi-award-winning writer director behind UK Netflix's hit *Been So Long* starring Michaela Coel and Arinzé Kene. The show also has Musical Direction from Phil Cornwell, who was Musical Director for the West End iteration of In the Heights and choreography by Ingrid Mackinnon, who will combine salsa, jazz and urban dance styles to create this opportunity to see the next generation of musical theatre professionals.

We Are Wac Arts (WAWA) Weekender: Explore, Discover, Celebrate

DATES: 26th – 28th July 2019

WHERE: Wac Arts, the Old Town Hall, Belsize Park, NW3 4QP

WEBSITE: www.wacarts.co.uk/weekender

Friday 26th July

Symposium – Is it Relevant?

Wac Arts Small Hall

2.00-3.30pm

Free

Symposium with expert speakers in participatory arts practices discussing what they feel it means to create art work which is 'relevant' to its audiences. The panel discussion, invites respected arts and cultural leaders and artists to discuss the importance of diverse and inclusive arts practice and what it means to develop an ecology that enables everyone to access the arts, on a personal or professional level.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-is-it-relevant-tickets-62706233031>

Para Dance Workshop: Showing Everyone Can Dance!

Wac Arts, Dance Studio 1

4pm – 5.30pm

Free

The Para Dance workshop is a chance to experience dance in a fully inclusive setting. Inclusive dance opens up many doors to people as a fun, recreational activity. There will be a mixture of social dance styles to encourage people of any dance ability to join in.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-para-dance-uk-workshop-tickets-62926840875>

Pod's Birthday

Wac Arts Main Hall

6.30pm – 8.30pm



Free

A relaxed participatory show to celebrate Pod's 3rd Birthday. Expect a fun evening of interactive gaming using assistive technology, giving you a taste of the award winning and pioneering work developed at Wac Arts curated by young people with disabilities.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-pods-birthday-tickets-62639751182>

Saturday 27th July

Woman SRSly Professional Development Workshops

Wac Arts Town Room

11- 1PM Woman SRSly: Get Noticed - Marketing Your Work

2PM-4PM Woman SRSly: Self Producing - Learning to Talk About Your Work

Age 16+

£7 per workshop

Woman SRSly CPD workshops are aimed at professional performing artists of any discipline and gender to help support them with their practice and get their work seen.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-woman-srsly-get-noticed-marketing-your-work-tickets-63427633760>

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-woman-srsly-self-producing-learning-to-talk-about-your-work-tickets-63427765153>

Para Dance Workshop for Families: Dance For All

Wac Arts Dance Studio 1

3pm -5pm

Free

Always wanted to know if you could dance like on Strictly Come Dancing? Want to see if you have the moves like Diversity? Have you been told no because of your disability? Then join Wac Arts and Para Dance UK and say yes, join us for 2 hours of fun dance activity open to everyone including your dad! Let us show that we can all dance!

Afro Fusion Dance Workshop with Patience James

Wac Arts Dance Studio 1

5pm - 6pm

Free

Afro-Fusion is a highly energetic dance genre that draws on the traditions of African, hip hop and other club cultures. It is advised to have some dance experience.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-patience-james-afro-fusion-dance-workshop-tickets-63427903567>

Echo Chambers

Writing Workshop with Bisola Elizabeth Alabi

Wac Arts Drama Studio

3.30pm – 4.30pm

Free

This workshop is an introduction to writing for new and emerging writers of all levels of experience. The workshop will be looking at mythology and generation with fun group activities around these themes to get



the creative juices flowing. This is a relaxed and fun workshop to show all participants that all have the ability to start writing and an avenue to get your voice heard.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-echo-chambers-writing-workshop-with-elizabeth-alabi-tickets-63427970768>

The Heritage Space

Wac Arts Small Hall

10 am - 5pm

Free

No tickets required

Story Cafes, Exhibition of the history of the Old Town Hall, LGBT Youth Choir Performance and more in the beautiful historical space in the Old Town Hall. This project is part of the National Lottery Heritage Funded project - Wac Arts Connecting Communities.

Cartooning Workshop

Wac Arts Small Hall

2.00pm-3.30pm

Free

Elizabeth Hay, an experienced Cartoonist who attends the University of the Third Age based at Wac Arts, will be running a cartooning workshop. Elizabeth will combine storytelling with making a cartoon strip on the theme of outsiders.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-cartooning-workshop-tickets-63469009516>

Liberation Disco

Wac Arts Main Hall

8 till late

£8 Early Bird/ £15 general release

18+

A late night party, thrown by Wac Arts, to celebrate Hampstead Town Hall's place in the history of supporting and celebrating the LGBTQ+ movement. DJ set by Ana Matronic (Scissor Sisters) and cabaret acts including Dolly Trolley Drag and London Gay Men's Chorus.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-liberation-disco-tickets-63342129013>

Sunday 28th July

Capsules

Wac Arts Main Hall

Free

2pm- 2.45pm

A digital experience devised by the young people at Wac Arts exploring the idea of sending messages through time. Senior Wac Arts is the original programme starting in 1978 for 14-26 year olds.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-capsules-tickets-63428002864>

Camden Covens

Wac Arts Main Hall

Free



3pm – 4pm

Live performance of text, song and physical theatre from Senior Wac Arts.

Senior Wac Arts is the original programme starting in 1978 for 14-26 year olds.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-camden-covens-tickets-63428042984>

Birthday Revolution

Wac Arts Small Hall

6.30pm-8.30pm

Tickets £15

Refugees go free

16+

A special edition of Ché Walkers' Revolution, a show comprised of multiple acts from artists across different performing arts disciplines. Past acts have included; Olivier Award Winner Sheila Atim, Hamilton lead Jamael Westman, OMAR, Danny Dyer, Wac Arts Patron Simon Callow, Akala.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wawa-weekender-revolution-tickets-63425254644>

Notes for editor

1. Wac Arts

Wac Arts has for 40 years empowered young people to change their worlds through the arts. Our creative hub in Camden it is an inclusive home reflecting the diversity of our world and celebrating our heritage of performance and participation. Wac Arts uses the infinite power of the arts to unleash the extraordinary potential of young people. www.wacarts.co.uk