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## **SPARC's 2018 LIVE ART Concert Documentary to Premiere April 25 on Local PBS Stations**

*Richmond students of all abilities perform alongside Jason Mraz, Josh Groban, Sara Bareilles, Michael McDonald, René Marie, and more in a joyful and visually stunning celebration of love and inclusiveness.*

More information: [IdeaStations.org/Live-Art-Love](http://IdeaStations.org/Live-Art-Love)

**Richmond, Va.** - Each year, the Richmond non-profit SPARC holds a show-stopping, awe-inspiring concert featuring 200 area students of all abilities performing alongside some of popular music's biggest names. And every year, the show sells out weeks in advance. Now local public television viewers will have a chance to partake in some of the magic of LIVE ART.

Following on the heels of the award-winning documentary "FROM THE WINGS: the LIVE ART story," this new documentary, "**LIVE ART: LOVE**," takes viewers behind the scenes of the 2018 LIVE ART concert, a special night of music, dance, and visual arts. A production of SPARC, humanstory films, and WCVE PBS, "**LIVE ART: LOVE**" premieres April 25 at 9 p.m. on WCVE/WHTJ PBS and April 28 at 7 p.m. on WVPT PBS.

SPARC's year-long LIVE ART program for youth with and without disabilities sees students working together in a variety of performing and visual arts classes. It's an exciting opportunity to learn, perform, make new friends, and develop empathy and understanding.

"In LIVE ART, hundreds of students, whether typically developing or with disabilities, are all being challenged in new ways," explains Erin Thomas-Foley, Creator/Director of LIVE ART and SPARC's Senior Director of Education. "This program is about bringing people together, understanding and embracing our differences, and building a community that radiates love and support for all."

SPARC was founded in 1981 as the School of the Performing Arts in the Richmond Community. Since then, it has served thousands of area youth, including Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Jason Mraz, who has been a part of the LIVE ART program since its establishment in 2011. The LIVE ART culminating concert has become an exciting Richmond summer tradition.

"The way that Richmond rallies around our students is exactly our dream for LIVE ART," says Ryan Ripperton, SPARC's Executive Director. "That while our individuality makes us beautifully unique, it is our shared humanity that makes our community stronger: here in Richmond, and through this broadcast, across the United States and beyond."

"**LIVE ART: LOVE**" features student performances and appearances by Jason Mraz, Josh Groban, Sara Bareilles, Michael McDonald, Rayvon Owen, René Marie, Raining Jane, Robbie Schaefer, Chris Caswell,

and local artists Daniel Clarke, Steve Bassett, Desirée Roots, and Susan Greenbaum. All of the artists donate their time.

“We often find that what first attracts our audience is our talented and generous guest artists,” explains Ripperton, “But over the course of the performance, it’s the students who truly melt the hearts of the audience. For our students, the fact that world-class guest artists want to perform with them, a 3,600-seat theater gets filled to see them, and now TV audiences across the country will be tuning in all just goes to confirm that they, too, are stars.”

Watch the local premiere of "**LIVE ART: LOVE**" April 25 at 9 p.m. on WCVE/WHTJ PBS and April 28 at 7 p.m. on WVPT PBS.

"**LIVE ART: LOVE**" is being offered to PBS stations nationwide by American Public Television (APT).

#### **About the Community Idea Stations:**

The Community Idea Stations, the largest locally owned and operated public media company in central Virginia, provides the best of PBS and NPR programming coupled with a strong set of community-based programs and services to make an important impact in the areas of arts, news, history, science, and education. Each week, the stations reach over 300,000 people throughout central Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley.

The stations offer television programming throughout the region on stations including WCVE/WHTJ PBS, WCVW/WVPY PBS, WVPT PBS, PBS Kids 24/7, lifestyle channel Create TV, and international program channel MHz Worldview.

In Richmond, the Community Ideas Stations also broadcasts on radio. WCVE News provides *Morning Edition*, *All Things Considered*, as well as NPR talk shows and BBC News on 88.9 FM (HD1). WCVE Music provides classical, jazz, blues, world music, and more on 93.1 FM and 107.3 FM (HD2).

More information can be found at [IdeaStations.org](http://IdeaStations.org).

#### **About SPARC:**

SPARC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1981 and is one of the nation’s most comprehensive, community-based youth performing arts education organizations. SPARC provides an atmosphere where creative expression flourishes, meaningful connections are built, and individuality is celebrated. In its 38 years, SPARC has engaged over 30,000 youth, aged 4 to 18, in a variety of award-winning community and school-based arts programs encompassing music, dance, acting, and theatre production for beginners to advanced students.

More information can be found at [SPARCRichmond.org](http://SPARCRichmond.org).

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