Totally Free, Socially Distanced World AIDS Day Events!

Plan now to watch Black theater and AIDS films, listen to top scientists, and watch 1990s videos—all on December 1.

November 27, 2020 By Trent Straube

Since 1987, people across the globe have observed World AIDS Day each December 1. This year will be no different, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, because of shutdowns and social distancing requirements, many organizations have learned to host business events virtually. The upshot is that many World AIDS Day events this year will be streamlined and available digitally—which means more people can participate than ever before.

Check with your local AIDS service organizations for nearby fundraisers, presentations, memorials, HIV testing venues and other goings-on. Below, we round up a sampling of the events taking place December 1. Although events are free (except where noted), many require an RSVP.

An image from the 2020 Day With(out) Art programCourtesy of visualaids.org

A still from “Me Cuido” by Las IndetectablesCourtesy of visualaids.org/Las Indetectables

Day With(out) Art: Transmissions: Arts organization Visual AIDS commissioned six international filmmakers to commemorate World AIDS Day with short films. They premiere November 30 and will be discussed during a free virtual panel discussion before becoming available to watch on VisualAIDS.org. This year’s filmmakers are Jorge Bordello (Mexico), Gevi Dimitrakopoulou (Greece), Las Indetectables (Chile), Lucía Egaña Rojas (Chile/Spain), Charan Singh (India/UK) and George Stanley Nsamba (Uganda).

Courtesy of horizontheatre.com

Love, M: This theatrical virtual premiere tells “a powerful story about mothers, sons and AIDS activists during the early days of the AIDS Crisis,” according to BroadwayWorld.com. Starring Lamman Rucker and Broadway’s Terry Burrell, the show is a production of Atlanta-based Horizon Theatre, the Black Leadership AIDS Crisis Coalition and AIDS Healthcare Foundation. It premieres at 7 p.m. ET and is followed by a community conversation. For more details, see HorizonTheatre.com.

A roster of speakers for ”World AIDS Day 2020: A National Conversation”Courtesy of aidsmemorial.org

A National Conversation: Powerful Voices from the AIDS and COVID-19 Pandemics: This forum and discussion covers health justice, social activism, remembrance and hope, according to event organizer the National AIDS Memorial. From 10 a.m. to noon PT, you’ll be able to listen to remarks from leading researchers (Anthony Fauci, MD), lawmakers (House Speaker Nancy Pelosi), government leaders (Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms), advocates and more. For a complete list, visit AIDSMemorial.org.

A view of the Wall Las Memorial AIDS MonumentCourtesy of Zoom/The Wall Las Memorias Project

The 27th Annual Noche de Las Memorias: Each year, the Wall Las Memorias AIDS Monument in Lincoln Park in Los Angeles honors those lost to the epidemic with an evening program in the park. Starting at 6 p.m. PT, the 2020 commemoration will include all the music and celebrities (Wilson Cruz, Justina Machado) of past events, but this year, anyone will be able to watch it live on Zoom,

Facebook and YouTube. Spanish translations are available. For more info and to register, visit TheWallLasMemorias.org.

AIDS researchers Timothy Schacker and Rowena JohnstonYouTube/@amfar

Meet the Scientists: Each year, amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research funds numerous researchers doing vital cure-related work and hosts a public event during which several of these scientists discuss their fascinating work. This year's Meet the Scientists event takes place from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m., Thursday, December 3. Listen as Timothy Shacker, MD, Jerome A. Zack, PhD, and Rowena Johnston, PhD, talk about the role of natural killer cells in reducing the HIV reservoir and leading to potential cure research. RSVP at amfAR.org.

Doin' My Drugs: This film tells the true story of Danish pop star Thomas Buttenschøn, who was born HIV positive in 1985 in Zambia and lost both parents to AIDS and is now on a crusade to use music to end AIDS in his homeland and beyond. The film is produced by HIV advocate Jake Glaser of the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation. Alas, the movie isn't free to watch, but it will be available on numerous streaming platforms, including DirecTV, IN DEMAND (Spectrum, Comcast), Swank (colleges, hospitals), Amazon, iTunes, Vudu, Xbox, Google Play, YouTube Movies and FandangoNOW.

Red Hot + Blue from Red Hot on Vimeo.

Red, Hot + Blue: In 1990, an album of Cole Porter covers by megastars such as U2 and Annie Lennox was released to raise HIV funds and awareness. The Red Hot + Blue album was a smash hit that spawned several other HIV-fundraising albums plus a 90-minute TV program that aired in 30 countries. The show was hosted by Richard Gere and included performances and public service announcements by Neneh Cherry, David Byrne, Erasure, Iggy Pop, Debbie Harry and others.

Honoring World AIDS Day and marking the 30th anniversary of Red Hot + Blue, both the album and TV special have been remastered. To get a teaser, you can watch the original version of the show above. Visit RedHot.org for details about other releases—and a line of charitable merchandise created with the New York City AIDS Memorial and artists David Wojnarowicz and Jenny Holzer.

For more World AIDS Day listings and other HIV-related events, see the POZ Events calendar.

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