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## **COCA ANNOUNCES NEW DIRECTORS OF PRE-PROFESSIONAL DIVISION ARTISTIC TEAM**

*MJ Imani, Alicia Revé Like, and Jermaine Manor Join Artistic Staff to Lead Student Companies & Ensembles*

**ST. LOUIS (August 12, 2022)**—[COCA](#), the fourth largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the U.S. and a leader in innovative arts education, announced three new members of its [Pre-Professional Division](#) Artistic Team. MJ Imani has been named Artistic Director of COCA Hip-Hop Crew and will oversee the curriculum and vision for the COCA Hip-Hop Crew, one of COCA's three student dance companies that focuses on developing young artists in hip-hop and commercial dance. Alicia Revé Like and Jermaine Manor have been named Co-Directors of Vocal Company and will work with student artists in the Theatre Artist Program to expand their vocal technique and repertoire.

"It is a joy and honor to welcome MJ, Alicia, and Jermaine to their new roles at COCA," said Orlando Graves Bolaños, COCA Senior Director of Arts Programming. "They all carry with them a drive for artistic excellence paired with a deep commitment to teaching their respective disciplines. In that sense, they continue with a characteristic tradition at COCA of providing children and youth with life-changing experiences in the arts that happen both in the classroom and on stage."

MJ is a professional dancer and choreographer from St. Louis. She began dance lessons at COCA at the age of eight and studied under the direction of Lee Nolting and COCA Hip-Hop Crew Founding Artistic Director Anthony "Redd" Williams. In 2017, MJ was selected as COCA's Katherine Dunham Pre-Professional Division Fellow. With a unique and inclusive curriculum that challenges students and represents the creative scene in the St. Louis community, MJ is excited to provide COCA's student artists with the tools to be successful in their craft.

Like is an actor and singer/songwriter. She graduated from University of Missouri in Columbia and earned degrees in music and vocal performance. Like is host of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra's on-demand video series, SLSO SoundLab. For the 2021–2022 season, Like served as Assistant Director of Vocal Company. She has performed in COCA summer musical productions of *Billy Elliot* and *Matilda The Musical*.

Manor is a singer, pianist, vocal coach, and worship and arts director. He is a graduate of New World School of the Performing Arts and an alum of Auburn University where he earned degrees in vocal pedagogy and music education. To singing and voice instruction, Manor brings a special understanding of the way the voice and body works. This knowledge sets him apart in his ability to communicate pedagogically and artistically. Manor was the music director for COCA's premiere of the musical *Big Machine*.

COCA's Pre-Professional Division is designed for students of all backgrounds who have aspirations for a professional career in dance or theatre as well as for students who want an intensive style of conservatory training taught by leading artists. The dance and theatre artist programs prepare young artists to discover and achieve the highest levels of professionalism and performance. Opportunities for students include training with professional guest artists, unforgettable performance opportunities, and individualized career guidance.

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## **ABOUT COCA**

COCA's mission is to *enrich lives and build community through the arts*. With a commitment to equity and access, COCA serves as a regional hub for learning in and through the arts for all ages from all backgrounds. One of the most diverse cultural institutions in St. Louis, COCA serves more than 50,000 students, audience members, artists, and families from more than 200 zip codes across the St. Louis region every year. The fourth largest multi-disciplinary arts organization in the country, COCA is committed to supporting the vitality and creativity of more than 200 artists at the heart of their work in schools, community centers, local business, cultural organizations, and on-site at its campus in University City.