



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 13, 2017

**The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
announces
participants selected to the
19th ANNUAL
*BETTY CARTER'S JAZZ AHEAD***

**Career development program for aspiring jazz musicians includes
23 performers from across the world
at the Kennedy Center
March 20 to March 31, 2017**

**Young musicians will present free performances on
the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, March 29-31, 2017**

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today announced the participants in *Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead* (BCJA)—the international jazz residency, performance, and composition project discovering and presenting the next generation of jazz greats—to be held March 20–31, 2017 at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Led by Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz Jason Moran, the *Jazz Ahead* program identifies outstanding, emerging jazz artists/composers in their mid-teens to age 25 and brings them together under the tutelage of experienced artists/instructors who coach and counsel them, polishing their performance, composing, and arranging skills.

A total of 23 highly talented young musicians from the United States, Austria, Germany, Japan, Australia, Costa Rica, Ukraine, and the Bahamas were selected by a competitive audition process that considered their composition and performance abilities. Joining Moran to lead the residency are seven renowned jazz artists who were

mentored by Betty Carter: trumpeter Darren Barrett, pianist Xavier Davis, vocalist Carmen Lundy, drummer Ralph Peterson, bassist Reuben Rogers, saxophonist Mark Shim, and guitarist Mark Whitfield. The 2017 BCJA program culminates in three concerts on the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, March 29-31, 2017 at 6 p.m., in which the graduates will perform original compositions. The free performances are open to the general public, and will also be broadcast live on the [Kennedy Center website](#) and archived for subsequent access.

Betty Carter founded *Jazz Ahead* as a vehicle to foster the musical talents of future generations of jazz talent. She originally developed the program in 1993 at 651, an arts center in Brooklyn. In 1997, the late Dr. Billy Taylor (Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz, 1994-2010) invited Carter to bring *Jazz Ahead* to Washington, D.C. In April 1998, the inaugural class of Kennedy Center *Jazz Ahead* students presented an unforgettable concert with Carter herself joining them on the Kennedy Center Concert Hall stage. Jason Moran, then a young pianist from Houston, was selected by Carter to be a student in this first year at Kennedy Center. *Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead* had a new home and Carter was filled with hope for the future of the program. After Carter's untimely death in September 1998, the Carter family graciously granted the Kennedy Center the opportunity to continue her legacy by making the program an annual Kennedy Center event. Distinguished alumni from *Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead* include pianists Jason Moran and Aaron Parks; guitarist Lage Lund; trombonist Andre Hayward; bassist Ameen Saleem; violinist Miri Ben-Ari; vocalists Daniela Schaechter, Grace Kelly, and Jazzmeia Horn; saxophonists Marcus Strickland and Jon Irabagon; and drummer Jamison Ross, among others.

Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead 2017 Participants

| NAME | INSTRUMENT | HOMETOWN |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Noel Mason | Bass | Australia |
| Kenneth Jimenez | Bass | Costa Rica |
| Emiliano Lasansky | Upright Bass | Iowa City, IA |
| Daniel Giannone | Drums | Wayne, NJ |
| Carlos Moreno | Druma | Portland, OR |

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|--------------------|------------|---------------------|
| Misaki Nakamichi | Drums | Japan |
| Will Rachofsky | Guitar | New York, NY |
| Django Martin-Rowe | Guitar | Australia |
| William Kjeer | Piano | Saint Paul, MN |
| Bijan Taghavi | Piano | New York, NY |
| Matthew Whitaker | Piano | Hackensack, NJ |
| Nathan Hook | Saxophone | Philadelphia, PA |
| Markus Howell | Saxophone | Deerfield Beach, FL |
| DeAndre Lettsome | Saxophone | Jacksonville, FL |
| Daniel Dickinson | Saxophone | New York, NY |
| Caleb Smith | Trombone | Shaker Heights, OH |
| Abdulrahman Amer | Trombone | New York, NY |
| Yakiv Tsvietinskyi | Trumpet | Ukraine |
| Giveton Gelin | Trumpet | Bahamas |
| Florian Klinger | Vibraphone | Austria |
| Mia Knop Jacobsen | Voice | Germany |
| Chloe Brisson | Voice | Hanover, NH |
| Ayodele Owolabi | Voice | Buford, GA |

ABOUT KENNEDY CENTER JAZZ

Kennedy Center Jazz, under the leadership of Artistic Director Jason Moran, presents legendary artists who have helped shape the art form, artists who are emerging on the jazz scene, and innovative multidisciplinary projects in hundreds of performances a year. The KC Jazz Club, launched in 2002 and dubbed “the future of the jazz nightclub” by *JazzTimes*, hosts many of these artists in an intimate setting; while the Crossroads Club, launched in 2012, is a nightclub dance venue. Annual Kennedy Center jazz events include the professional development residency program for young artists, *Betty Carter’s Jazz Ahead*; NPR’s *A Jazz Piano Christmas*, the Kennedy Center holiday tradition shared by millions around the country via broadcast on NPR; and the *Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival*, created in 1996 by the late Dr. Billy Taylor (Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz, 1994–2010). The Center’s jazz concerts are frequently recorded for future broadcast on NPR.

FUNDING CREDITS

Betty Carter’s Jazz Ahead is made possible through the generous support of The King-White Family Foundation and Dr. J. Douglas White and by The William N. Cafritz Jazz Initiative.

Additional support is provided by The Argus Fund.

Major support for educational programs at the Kennedy Center is provided by **David and Alice Rubenstein** through the Rubenstein Arts Access Program.

Kennedy Center education and related artistic programming is made possible through the generosity of the National Committee for the Performing Arts and the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts.

The *Millennium Stage* is brought to you by Target and The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation.

The *Millennium Stage* was created and underwritten by James A. Johnson and Maxine Isaacs to make the performing arts accessible to everyone in fulfillment of the Kennedy Center's mission to its community and the nation.

Additional funding for the *Millennium Stage* is provided by Bernstein Family Foundation, The Isadore and Bertha Gudelsky Family Foundation, Inc., The Meredith Foundation, The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Dr. Deborah Rose and Dr. Jan A.J. Stolwijk, U.S. Department of Education, and the Millennium Stage Endowment Fund.

The *Millennium Stage* Endowment Fund was made possible by James A. Johnson and Maxine Isaacs, Fannie Mae Foundation, James V. Kimsey, Gilbert and Jaylee Mead, Mortgage Bankers Association of America and other anonymous gifts to secure the future of the *Millennium Stage*.

Gifts and grants to educational programs at the Kennedy Center are provided by Sandra K. & Clement C. Alpert; AnBryce Foundation; AOL Charitable Foundation; The Argus Fund; Bank of America; Bender Foundation, Inc.; The Honorable Stuart Bernstein and Wilma E. Bernstein; Centene Charitable Foundation; The Charles Engelhard Foundation; The Clark Charitable Foundation; CMA Foundation; Crayola; DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities; Dr. Gerald and Paula McNichols Foundation; The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, Inc.; David Gregory and Beth Wilkinson; Estee Lauder; Exelon Foundation; Ford Foundation; Harman Family Foundation; The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust; The Hearst Foundations; Herb Alpert Foundation; Hilton Worldwide; The Isadore and Bertha Gudelsky Family Foundation, Inc.; iTheatrics; The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation; James A. Johnson and Maxine Isaacs; JCPenny Cares; the Kimsey Endowment; Keith Haring Foundation; The King-White Family Foundation and Dr. J. Douglas White; The Kiplinger Foundation; Natalie and Herb Kohler and Kohler Co.; Laird Norton Family Foundation; Legg Mason Charitable Foundation; Macy's; The Markow Totevy Foundation; Linda and Tobia Mercuro; Little Kids Rock; The Meredith Foundation; The Millennium Stage Endowment Fund; The Morningstar Foundation; The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; Music Theatre International; Myra and Leura Younker Endowment Fund; NAMM Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; National Endowment for the Humanities; Newman's Own Foundation; the Embassy of the State of Qatar; Park Foundation, Inc.; Paul M. Angell Family Foundation; Mrs. Irene Pollin; Prince Charitable Trusts; Robert Rauschenberg Foundation; Rosemary Kennedy Education Fund; Dr. Deborah Rose and Dr. Jan A. J. Stolwijk; Rosenthal Family Foundation; Ryna and Melvin Cohen Family Foundation; Share Fund; Mr. and Mrs. Albert H. Small; Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation; Target; the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates; The Volgenau Foundation; Volkswagen Group of America; Washington Gas; Wells Fargo; Beatrice and Anthony Welters; William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust; Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts; and generous contributors to the Abe Fortas Memorial Fund and by a major gift to the fund from the late Carolyn E. Agger, widow of Abe Fortas.

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