



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 10, 2017

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Presents**

***Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival:
Abbey Lincoln Tribute***

featuring

**Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dianne Reeves, Esperanza Spalding,
and Terri Lyne Carrington**

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, under the leadership of Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz Jason Moran, continues to celebrate the legacy of jazz artist Mary Lou Williams with the annual *Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival*, May 4, 2017 at 8 p.m. in the Eisenhower Theater. This year’s festival will celebrate the musical legacy of vocalist, actor, and civil rights activist and NEA Jazz Master Abbey Lincoln, and features NEA Jazz Master Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dianne Reeves, Esperanza Spalding, and Music Director and drummer Terri Lyne Carrington.

As one of the first ladies of jazz, Mary Lou Williams began as Pittsburgh’s “little piano girl” and proceeded to become a musical inspiration to the world. She was a pianist, composer, and arranger of some of the genre’s greatest tunes, from boogie-woogie and blues to ragtime, swing, impressionism, bop, and beyond. Williams played along some of the greats: Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, and Thelonious Monk.

Abbey Lincoln was beloved for her powerful and unique voice, as well as for pursuing her art with integrity and turning music into a genuine celebration of life. The tribute to Abbey Lincoln highlights President Kennedy's emphasis on justice, which is symbolized in Abbey Lincoln's outspoken and endless fight for civil rights. This performance is part of *JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy*, the Kennedy Center's yearlong programming initiative marking the 100th anniversary of John F. Kennedy's birth and legacy. *JFKC* programming continues through the end of 2017.

"The *Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival* is a unique opportunity to honor Mary Lou's significant contributions and artistry," said Jason Moran, artistic director for jazz at the Kennedy Center. "I'm thrilled to continue this celebration of her as we give a powerful salute to another pioneer, the one and only Abbey Lincoln."

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets to the *Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival: Abbey Lincoln Tribute* on Thursday, May 4, 2017 at 8 p.m. are on sale for \$25–\$59 and can be purchased in person at the Kennedy Center Box Office, by calling InstantCharge at (202) 467-4600 or through the Kennedy Center website at www.kennedy-center.org.

ABOUT KENNEDY CENTER JAZZ

Kennedy Center Jazz, under the leadership of Artistic Director for Jazz 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.

About *JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy*

In the year leading up to the centenary of John F. Kennedy's birth on May 29, 2017, the Kennedy Center, the living memorial to President John F. Kennedy, is re-imagining the very mission of the institution created in his name. Inspired by some of the key ideals he championed—Courage, Freedom, Justice, Service, and Gratitude—the Center is featuring special programming through the year that explores, challenges, and reflects the contemporary

spirit of America. Guided by JFK's legacy of idealism, hope, and empowerment, the Kennedy Center will serve as a creative catalyst and meeting place, inviting members of the public to engage directly with artists and ideas, and actively participate in the civic and cultural life of their country.

FUNDING CREDITS

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Support for JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy is provided by Ambassador Elizabeth Frawley Bagley, Chevron, The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, and Target.

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