

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
and
Artistic Advisor at Large Renée Fleming
announce programming for the 2017–2018 season of**

Renée Fleming VOICES

**Second season of new series showcases
the beauty, power, and diversity of the human voice**

**Artists include Renée Fleming & Christian McBride, Leslie Odom Jr.,
Cynthia Erivo, Barbara Hannigan, Angélique Kidjo,
Ute Lemper, Isabel Leonard, and Gregory Porter**

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Artistic Advisor at Large Renée Fleming today announce the artists for the 2017–2018 season of **Renée Fleming VOICES**, a concert series that heralds the power of the voice across a wide range of genres.

The second season of the series includes *Hamilton* Tony Award® winner Leslie Odom Jr.; Broadway sensation and Tony® winner for *The Color Purple*, Cynthia Erivo; Barbara Hannigan, one of the world’s leading performers of contemporary opera, performing with pianist Reinbert de Leeuw; world music legend Angélique Kidjo; renowned cabaret chanteuse Ute Lemper and the Vogler Quartet in *Paris Days, Berlin Nights*, a journey through the European songbook of the Weimar years; opera star Isabel Leonard, a Washington National Opera favorite, who performs a recital co-presented with Fortas Chamber Music Concerts; A Night of Jazz with Gregory Porter and the NSO Pops, co-presented with NSO Pops and Kennedy Center Jazz; and Renée Fleming performing alongside acclaimed jazz bassist Christian McBride.

“I have been so gratified by the audience response to the first season of the *VOICES* series, and I am thrilled that our second season expands to include an even greater diversity of vocal talents from all over the world,” said Renée Fleming. “These are some of the most exciting singers I know, and I can’t wait for Kennedy Center audiences to experience their incredible talents.”

Below are the details of the 2017–2018 season of Renée Fleming *VOICES*, with commentary from Ms. Fleming on why she personally selected each artist for the series.

Renée Fleming & Christian McBride
Friday, October 13, 2017 at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.
Terrace Theater

“I can’t wait to sing again with the iconic jazz bassist Christian McBride at the re-opening of the Kennedy Center’s Terrace Theater. We first recorded together on my Christmas in New York disc, and I recently joined him in his series at Wigmore Hall in London. Christian’s consummate musicianship, open-hearted and genre-busting sensibility, and sheer virtuosity are a rare treat. He pushed me to the same kind of exploration; but then, freedom is the essence of jazz.”

Leslie Odom Jr.
Saturday, October 14, 2017 at 8 p.m.
Eisenhower Theater

“Imagine a performer who could edge out Lin-Manuel Miranda for a prize, any prize. Last year, Leslie Odom Jr. won the Tony Award® for Best Actor in a Musical for his performance in Hamilton, which I was fortunate to see. I also heard him at the 2016 Kennedy Center Spring Gala. He is a consummate, elegant artist, and this is a performance not to miss.”

Cynthia Erivo
Friday, November 3, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, November 4, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.
Terrace Theater

“I was so fortunate to see Cynthia Erivo’s blazing, Tony Award®-winning performance in The Color Purple on Broadway. My family and I were on our feet shouting when she blew out the sound system in the penultimate anthem! Washington, D.C. and television audiences will remember her for her spectacular rendition of “The Impossible Dream” in tribute to John F. Kennedy at the recent Kennedy Center Honors, and she was a high point of the Grammy Awards® telecast singing “God Only Knows” with John Legend. Her gift for unsparing, emotional honesty paired with vocal fireworks makes her performances simply unforgettable.”

Barbara Hannigan with Reinbert de Leeuw

Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.

Terrace Theater

“Soprano Barbara Hannigan is redefining what a ‘classical’ vocalist can be and do, and I have huge admiration for her creative artistry. Whether she is singing on the opera stage, championing new music, or conducting, she delivers the riveting theatrical experiences that audiences crave, and that we need in the classical world. Her recording of Paul Griffiths’s let me tell you topped countless ‘Best of 2016’ lists. I have seen her in George Benjamin’s masterful opera Written on Skin twice, and I can only say, ‘fierce and perfect.’”

Angélique Kidjo

Thursday, November 30, 2017 at 8 p.m.

Eisenhower Theater

“I love when it’s almost impossible to classify an artist. Imagine a singer-songwriter who combines music with activism, earning awards from the World Economic Forum in Davos and Amnesty International; who cites James Brown, Miriam Makeba, Nina Simone, Jimi Hendrix, and Carlos Santana as influences; and who has a passion for exploring traditional roots of popular music to create something new. Having collaborated with Alicia Keys, Dave Matthews, Philip Glass, John Legend, the Kronos Quartet, Bono, and the Luxembourg Philharmonic, Angélique Kidjo is the kind of inspiring artist for whom the term ‘world music’ is too restrictive, and it’s an honor to have her perform as part of VOICES.”

Ute Lemper’s Paris Days, Berlin Nights with the Vogler Quartet

Friday, March 16, 2018 at 8 p.m.

Eisenhower Theater

“One of the great cabaret artists of our time, Ute Lemper is also the preeminent interpreter of the songs of Kurt Weill. He is only one of the Weimar-era composers who figure in her show Paris Days, Berlin Nights, which she will perform with the Vogler Quartet. To excel at cabaret, you need to be an actor with a distinctive musical sensibility. Lemper’s command as a stage and film actress, a singer-songwriter, and even as a visual artist informs her intense, completely unique performances in cabaret. I would not miss this!”

Isabel Leonard

Sunday, April 15, 2018 at 2 p.m.

Terrace Theater

Co-presented with Fortas Chamber Music Concerts

“Isabel Leonard is in demand at opera houses all over the world for her sparkling voice and stage presence. I loved singing with her recently at Carnegie Hall for the 125th anniversary of that legendary hall. Whether seeing her as Cinderella, Rosina, or Cherubino—or on Sesame Street—beauty and glamour are hallmarks of both her singing and her presence: a classical singer for the 21st century!”

A Night of Jazz with Gregory Porter and the NSO Pops

Wednesday, June 27, 2018 at 8 p.m.

Concert Hall

Co-presented with NSO Pops and Kennedy Center Jazz

“When Don Was of Capitol Records first mentioned Gregory Porter to me, I immediately found Be Good on the Internet and became, well, obsessed! I was so taken with his melding of R&B and jazz vocals with his completely modern songwriting sensibility, I became a fan. His work takes a refreshingly honest look at the sometimes small moments that truly make up our lives. He has taken Europe by storm, and I’m glad he has found the time to visit us and participate in VOICES. I hope he will return again and again.”

TICKET INFORMATION

Subscriptions for the Renée Fleming VOICES series are on sale now. To purchase a subscription, patrons should visit the Box Office, call the Subscription Office at (202) 416-8500, or go to www.kennedy-center.org/subscribe. Subscriptions may be purchased in advance of general on-sale dates, which will be announced soon. Groups of 20 or more may contact the Kennedy Center Group Sales office at (202) 416-8400.

ABOUT RENÉE FLEMING

Renée Fleming is one of the most acclaimed singers of our time. In 2016, she was named an Artistic Advisor at Large for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where she participates in a variety of projects. In 2013, President Obama awarded her America's highest honor for an artist, the National Medal of Arts. She brought her voice to a vast new audience in 2014, as the first classical artist ever to sing the National Anthem at the Super Bowl. Winner of the 2013 Grammy Award® for Best Classical Vocal Solo, She has sung for momentous occasions from the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony to the Diamond Jubilee Concert for Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace. An earlier distinction came in 2008 when she became the first woman in the 125-year history of the Metropolitan Opera to solo headline an opening night gala.

Her 2016–2017 tour schedule includes concerts in San Francisco, Toronto, Boston, Budapest, Paris, Madrid, and Tokyo. This season she appeared as the Marschallin in a new production of Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Royal Opera House, and she will be seen in the same role when the production premieres at the Metropolitan Opera this spring.

Known for bringing new audiences to classical music and opera, she has sung not only with Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo, and Andrea Bocelli, but also with Elton John, Paul Simon, Sting, Lou Reed, Josh Groban, and Joan Baez. She has hosted a wide variety of television and radio broadcasts, including the Metropolitan Opera's *Live in HD* series and *Live from Lincoln Center*. Her book *The Inner Voice* was published by Viking Penguin in 2004, and is currently in its 14th paperback printing. In 2013, she joined the Kennedy Center to present *American Voices*, a concert and three-day festival celebrating the best American singing in all genres, that became the subject of a *Great Performances* documentary on PBS.

She won her fourth Grammy Award® for her album *Poèmes*. Her most recent album, *Distant Light*, was recorded with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and released in January by Decca. It features Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, *The Strand Settings*, composed for her by Anders Hillborg, as well as songs by Bjork in new orchestral arrangements. Recipient of 14 Grammy® nominations to date, she has recorded everything from complete operas and song recitals, indie rock, jazz, and the movie soundtrack of *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*.

In 2010, she was named the first-ever creative consultant at Lyric Opera of Chicago. She is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Hall Corporation, the Board of Sing for Hope, and the Artistic Advisory Board of the Polyphony Foundation

Among her awards are the Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal, Germany's Cross of the Order of Merit, Sweden's Polar Music Prize, France's Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, and honorary doctorates from Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, Duke University, Carnegie Mellon University, the Eastman School of Music, and The Juilliard School.

www.reneefleming.com.

ABOUT THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is America's living memorial to President Kennedy. Under the guidance of Chairman [David M. Rubenstein](#), and President [Deborah F. Rutter](#), the nine theaters and stages of the nation's busiest performing arts facility attract more than three million visitors to more than 2,000 performances each year, while center-related touring productions, television, and radio broadcasts reach 40 million more around the world.

The Center produces and presents performances of music, dance, comedy, and theater; supports artists in the creation of new work; and serves the nation as a leader in arts education. With its artistic affiliates, the [National Symphony Orchestra](#) and [Washington National Opera](#), the Center has produced more than 300 theatrical productions, and dozens of new ballets, operas, and musical works, in addition to hosting numerous international cultural festivals. The Center's Emmy[®] and Peabody Award-winning [The Kennedy Center Honors](#) is broadcast annually on CBS and annual [The Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize for American Humor](#) is broadcast on PBS.

The education programs of the Kennedy Center, including those of its affiliate [VSA](#), the international organization on arts and disability, have become models for communities across the country and have unlocked the door to learning for millions of young people. [Education at the Kennedy Center](#) produces and presents age appropriate performances and educational events, and fosters innovative programming, curriculum, and professional development for students, teachers, and families.

The Center and its affiliates stage more than 400 free performances by artists from throughout the world each year on the Center's main stages, and every day of the year at 6 p.m. on its Millennium Stages, which are also streamed live, online. The Center also offers reduced and complimentary tickets to young people, active members of the military, and the underserved through its [MyTix program](#) and offers a Specially Priced Tickets program for students, seniors, persons with disabilities, and others with fixed low incomes.

To learn more about the Kennedy Center, please visit www.kennedy-center.org. The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is America's living memorial to President Kennedy. Under the guidance of Chairman David M. Rubenstein and President Deborah F. Rutter, the nine theaters and stages of the nation's busiest performing arts facility attract more than three million visitors to more than 2,000 performances each year, while Center-related touring productions, television, and radio broadcasts reach 40 million more around the world.

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To learn more about the Kennedy Center, please visit kennedy-center.org.

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TICKETS & INFORMATION

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