



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 3, 2017

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

celebrates

**Millennium Stage Turns 20**

featuring

**Scythian and Big Sam's Funky Nation**

**Free Party Sunday, March 19, 2017**

**Happy Hour 5–6 p.m.  
Performances 6–8 p.m.**

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announces a free celebration of the 20th anniversary of Millennium Stage to thank the audiences, artists, donors, staff, ushers, fellows, and more who have made this one-of-a-kind venture a continued, resounding success. The March 19 event, utilizing both the north and south stages, will feature performances by Celtic rock band **Scythian** and New Orleans funk band **Big Sam's Funky Nation** in a massive party overtaking the Center's Grand Foyer.

Founded in 1997 by former Kennedy Center Board Chair James A. Johnson, the Millennium Stage remains the only venue in the world to offer a free performance every day of the year that is also streamed live on the web, fulfilling the Center's mission of making the performing arts available to everyone. It has proven to be a perfect representation of the diverse and multifaceted performing arts offered by the Kennedy

Center, with such past performers as Gladys Knight, Christoph Eschenbach, Aaron Goldman, Manzari Brothers, Norah Jones, Aretha Franklin, India.Arie, Circo Para Todos, Phil Wiggins, Smokey Robinson, and Kailash Kher & Kailasa.

In the past two decades, more than three million audience members from the D.C. area, across the U.S., and around the world have attended a Millennium Stage performance, with countless others experiencing these shows via the live stream. This special event 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, inspired by five ideals frequently attributed to America's 35th President: *Courage, Freedom, Justice, Service, and Gratitude*. JFKC programming continues through the end of 2017.

"All of us at the Kennedy Center are incredibly grateful to our audiences for their enthusiastic support of Millennium Stage. In the past two decades more than 7,000 artists from across the globe have been presented, representing a diverse breadth of genres from established artistic traditions to the latest frontiers of performance," said Deborah F. Rutter, President of the Kennedy Center. "Jim Johnson had a vision for what accessibility to the arts might look like. What resulted in our beloved Millennium Stage 20 years ago was brilliant and ahead of its time."

The night will kick-off at 5:00 p.m. with a happy hour in the Grand Foyer, featuring half price beer and house wine. The first 1,000 guests at the happy hour will receive a special commemorative Millennium Stage 20th Anniversary t-shirt. Performances begin at 6:00 p.m. with **Scythian**, a band that plays roots music from Celtic, Eastern European, and Appalachian traditions with a thunderous energy that beckons crowds into a barn-dance, rock concert experience. Immediately following, at 7:00 p.m., the party will continue with **Big Sam's Funky Nation**, a group of world-class musicians that are a driving force of urban funk, melding funk, rock & roll, Hip Hop, and jazz, gluing everything together with a brassy influence. For more information, visit [tkc.co/mstage](http://tkc.co/mstage).

## **FUNDING CREDITS**

*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, the Kimsey Endowment, Gilbert† and Jaylee† Mead, Mortgage Bankers Association of America and other anonymous gifts to secure the future of the Millennium Stage.*

*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.*

## **ABOUT THE KENNEDY CENTER MILLENNIUM STAGE**

The Kennedy Center is the only U.S. institution that presents a free performance 365 days a year. Created in 1997 and underwritten by James A. Johnson and Maxine Isaacs, the Millennium Stage features a broad spectrum of performing arts each day at 6 p.m. Brought to the public by Target Stores and The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation, the Millennium Stage helps fulfill the Center's mission of making the performing arts accessible to everyone. In the past 20 years, more than three million visitors have enjoyed more than 7,300 groups. Through intentionally identifying artistic partners regionally, nationally, and internationally, performances reflect the breadth and depth of culture in society, exploring styles including jazz, ballet, storytelling, popular music, Hip Hop, contemporary dance, opera, choral music, tap dance, theater, chamber music, symphonic music, puppetry, stand-up comedy, and cabaret. Of the many performers that have appeared on the Millennium Stage, approximately 25,000 have been Washington-area artists and more than 6,000 have been international performing artists representing more than 50 countries. The Millennium Stage has also hosted artists representing all 50 states, and has presented more than 15,000 artists in their Kennedy Center debuts. Since 1999, each night's performance has been broadcast live over the internet, and more than 4,430 of these performances have been digitally archived on the Kennedy Center's website, [kennedy-center.org](http://kennedy-center.org).

**Need a Lift?**

The free Kennedy Center Shuttle, the Center's link to Metro's Foggy Bottom/George Washington University Metro station (blue/orange/silver lines), departs every 15 minutes from 9:45 a.m. to midnight, Monday – Friday; 10 a.m. to midnight, Saturdays; noon to midnight, Sundays; and 4:00 p.m. to midnight on Federal holidays. Free parking is not available when attending free events.

**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.

For more information on the Millennium Stage,  
please visit the [Millennium Stage event page](#) or [Millennium Stage Facebook page](#).

Discover the [Kennedy Center](#) on social media:



**#MStageAt20**  
**#MStage365**

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