The Kennedy Center announces the

2017 Kennedy Center Spring Gala
“Come Together:
A Celebration of John Lennon”

Executive Music Director, T Bone Burnett
Music Director, David Mansfield

Monday, May 8, 2017 in the Concert Hall

(WASHINGTON)—In one of D.C.’s most anticipated social events of the year, the Kennedy Center pays tribute to musical icon John Lennon at the 2017 Kennedy Center Spring Gala on Monday, May 8, 2017 in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. The evening’s program celebrates the legendary late singer’s indelible impact on musical history from his skyrocketing start with the Beatles in 1960 through his celebrated and sometimes controversial career as a solo artist until his untimely death in 1980. His musical influence transcends a single genre or generation, leaving us with visionary albums like John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band, Imagine and Double Fantasy, and timeless ballads such as “Give Peace a Chance,” “Working Class Hero,” and “Imagine.” From the commercial success of the Beatles to his celebrated songwriting partnership with Paul McCartney to his marriage to artist and activist Yoko Ono, Lennon’s sound was ever-evolving to reflect his rebellious nature as an artist, his wit, and his often provocative commentary on global politics. He voiced particular criticism of the Vietnam War and some of his songs were adopted as anthems by the anti-war movement.
He was posthumously inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1987, and twice into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, in 1998 as a member of the Beatles, and in 1994 as a solo artist.

The executive music director of the 2017 Spring Gala is T Bone Burnett, and the music director is David Mansfield. Full programming and casting details for the Spring Gala concert will be announced at a later date.

The Spring Gala is presented as part of JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy, a yearlong celebration of the Kennedy Center’s namesake and the 35th President of the United States. JFKC incorporates five enduring ideals often ascribed to President Kennedy—Courage, Freedom, Justice, Service, and Gratitude—into the fabric of the Kennedy Center’s programming through a series of performances, educational initiatives, and free public events. John Lennon’s idealistic spirit, along with his use of activism to inspire both social justice and political change, reflects these ideals and President Kennedy’s lasting legacy of empowerment and civic engagement.

The Gala will also feature the second annual presentation of the Kennedy Center Award for the Human Spirit, commemorating the seminal contributions made by President John F. Kennedy and First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy to cultural life in the United States. The award will recognize two recipients who have had an enduring impact on the advancement of arts and culture—one for his or her commitment to personal advocacy and philanthropy for the performing arts, and another for his or her creative use of the arts and arts education to advance and enrich community life at the local, state, or national level. The 2017 recipients of the Award for the Human Spirit will be announced at a later date. Dustin Yellin—artist and founder of Pioneer Works in Red Hook, Brooklyn—has again been commissioned to create original works of art that will serve as the physical awards. The artist made a major exhibition of 12 Psychogeographies at the Kennedy Center in April of 2015, one of which is part of the Kennedy Center’s permanent art collection and currently on display in the Center’s Hall of States.
The Spring Gala’s black-tie optional evening begins with a reception on the Roof Terrace level at 5:30 p.m. followed by an elegant dinner in the Atrium at 6:15 p.m. The Gala performance begins at 8:15 p.m. in the Concert Hall and the evening concludes with desert and dancing at the ‘Til Midnight Party for all event sponsors on the Roof Terrace level. As one of Washington’s leading benefit engagements, the annual Kennedy Center Spring Gala provides critical funding to support the Center’s performances, education programs, and outreach initiatives. To inquire about Spring Gala VIP packages, patrons may email springgala@kennedy-center.org or call (202) 416-8338 for additional information.

Concert-only tickets for the 2017 Spring Gala Come Together: A Celebration of John Lennon start at $45 and may be purchased at the Kennedy Center Box Office, online, or by calling Instant Charge at (202) 467-4600; patrons living outside the Washington, D.C. metropolitan calling area may dial toll-free at (800) 444-1324. Tickets go on sale to members on Friday, Jan. 27, and to the general public on Monday, Jan. 30.

The Kennedy Center Spring Gala Premier Sponsor is Boeing, whose contributions play a crucial leadership role in supporting the presentation of the Kennedy Center’s artistic and educational programs throughout the year.

ABOUT T BONE BURNETT
With 50-years of experience in music and entertainment, T Bone Burnett has earned an unparalleled reputation as a first-rate innovative artist, songwriter, producer, performer, film and concert producer, record company owner and artists’ advocate. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Burnett grew up in Fort Worth, Texas where he first began writing songs and making records. Burnett was traveling the country as a free-lance record producer when he was asked by Bob Dylan to play guitar in his band on the now-legendary Rolling Thunder Revue tour leading Burnett to form the Alpha Band with David Mansfield and Steven Soles. Burnett made three acclaimed albums with the group before making a string of solo records in the 1980s at the end of which he began to work in film, beginning with Roy Orbison’s, A Black and White Night.

Burnett is an Academy Award® winner, a Golden Globe winner and 13-time Grammy Award®-winner. He’s worked and collaborated with musicians across many genres including Elton John, Robert Plant, Alison Krauss, B.B. King, Tony Bennett, k.d. lang, Elvis Costello, The Civil Wars, Taylor Swift, Ryan Bingham, Steve Earle, and Leon Russell. Burnett’s first major foray into film was his collaboration with the Coen Brothers on The Big Lebowski, and has
since held multiple titles for numerous films including The Big Lebowski, O Brother, Where Art Thou?, Cold Mountain, The Hunger Games, Walk The Line, Inside Llewyn Davis, and Crazy Heart, which he also produced. He also has multiple credits in television including as the Executive Music Producer and Composer for the HBO series True Detective, and he was Executive Music Producer and Composer for the first season of the ABC television series, Nashville. He is currently producing and narrating an animated series with Drew Christie called Drawn and Recorded.

ABOUT DAVID MANSFIELD
David is an award-winning film and television composer. His score for the A&E mini-series Broken Trail was nominated for an Emmy®. David’s first film score was for the controversial epic Heaven’s Gate. It led to a four-film collaboration with director Michael Cimino, and a Golden Globe® nomination for Year of The Dragon. Other long-standing relationships are with Mexican auteur Arturo Ripstein and Maggie Greenwald (Ballad of Little Jo, Songcatcher). His score for Ripstein’s Deep Crimson won Best Musical Score at both the Venice and Havana Film Festivals.

David is also a world-renowned musician, coming to national attention at age 19 as part of Bob Dylan’s Rolling Thunder Revue. SHe subsequently formed The Alpha Band with T Bone Burnett and Steven Soles. Later, he was one of the founding members of Bruce Hornsby and The Range, receiving an RIAA platinum album and a Grammy® for “The Way It Is.” His credits read like a veritable who’s who of popular music, from the late Johnny Cash to Sting, and most recently, with Bobby McFerrin as part of his “SpiritYouAll” project.

Other recent projects include producing Loudon Wainwright III’s latest record, Haven’t Got The Blues (Yet) and composing the score for Maggie Greenwald’s new film, Sophie And The Rising Sun.

This program is part of JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy
In the year leading up to the centennial 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 visit www.kennedy-center.org/jfkc

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