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The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announces its

2017–2018 SEASON:
PERFORMANCES FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Me... Jane: The Dreams & Adventures of Young Jane Goodall
A World Premiere Musical Commissioned by the Kennedy Center
based on the life of Dr. Jane Goodall

Digging Up Dessa
A World Premiere Kennedy Center Commission
part of the Women’s Voices Theatre Festival

Night Train 57
A World Premiere Kennedy Center Co-Commission
by Grammy® winner Dan Zanes with Claudia Eliaza

Plus
National Symphony Orchestra Music for Young Audiences, including
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets™ in Concert;
Washington National Opera’s The Little Prince;
and other special events

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today announced programming for its 2017–2018 season of Performances for Young Audiences, featuring adventures in theater, music, and dance that will captivate and enrich audiences of young people and adults alike. This season’s three new Kennedy Center commissions include two theater pieces about female trailblazing scientists, and a new sensory-friendly folk opera that will take audiences all the way to the stars.
Based on Patrick McDonnell’s Caldecott Honor Book of the same title, *Me… Jane: The Dreams & Adventures of Young Jane Goodall* is a new musical adaptation in which audiences join young Jane Goodall and her toy chimpanzee, Jubilee, as they learn about the world around them and the importance of protecting all living species. From the team behind the Kennedy Center’s 2014 production of *The Gift of Nothing, Me… Jane* is adapted by Patrick McDonnell, Aaron Posner, and Andy Mitton, with Music and Lyrics by Andy Mitton. The November production, a part of JFKC: *A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy* for its representation of President Kennedy’s ideals of service and courage, is directed by Aaron Posner with choreography by Christopher d’Amboise. The role of Young Jane will be played by four-time Helen Hayes award winner Erin Weaver.

“The idea of bringing *Me… Jane* to the stage is very exciting,” says Dr. Jane Goodall. “I love the book and I am sure that the live action will inspire children of all ages to pursue their dreams and to realize if Jane did it, they can do it, too.”

*Digging Up Dessa*, presented as a part of the *Women’s Voices Theater Festival*, introduces us to young Dessa, whose explorations into her own history lead her to uncover the story of pioneering English paleontologist Mary Anning. *Digging Up Dessa* is directed by Rives Collins and written by Laura Schellhardt, whose *Ever In The Glades* was seen at the Kennedy Center’s *New Visions/New Voices* theater festival in 2016 and will make its highly anticipated return to the Kennedy Center in June.

A Kennedy Center co-commission with VSA, *Night Train 57* comes from Grammy Award® winner Dan Zanes and vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Claudia Eliaza. Using 21st-century handmade sing-along music, they take the audience on a freewheeling train ride through the galaxies and back in this new sensory-friendly folk opera for the entire family.
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*Artists and performances are subject to change.*
**Night Train 57: A Sensory-Friendly Folk Opera**
October 6–8, 2017 in the Family Theater
A world premiere Kennedy Center and VSA co-commission created by Grammy® winner Dan Zanes and vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Claudia Eliaza. Audiences will join Zanes, Eliaza, and more special guests on a far-out train ride to the galaxies and back. This adventure welcomes travelers of all ages and sensory levels, highlighting the power of friendship and community during a joyous trip through the stars. The festive sounds of guitar, trombone, mandolin, flute, harmonica, ukulele, percussion—and, of course, voices—energize the train, while homespun sets and video projection create an unforgettable intergalactic atmosphere. *For all ages.*

**Grey Skies Blue**
October 27–29, 2017 in the Family Theater
Fifteen accomplished dancers tell powerful stories of a summer of friendship in *SHAPESHIFT* Theatrical’s trademark style of interwoven dance vignettes. Exploring themes of family, race, love, and betrayal, this diverse collective combines Hip Hop moves with the lyricism of contemporary dance. *Most enjoyed by ages 9 and up.*

**NSO Family Concert: Halloween Spooktacular**
October 29, 2017 in the Concert Hall
Emil de Cou conducts the NSO in a frightfully fun concert, where ghoulishly costumed musicians perform spooky favorites. Audiences can feel free to come in costume, and activities begin one hour early in the Atrium for trick-or-treating, plus a special Haunted Hall Musical Instrument “Petting Zoo.” *Most enjoyed by ages 5 and up.*

**Me... Jane: The Dreams & Adventures of Young Jane Goodall**
November 18–December 10, 2017 in the Family Theater
Before she was a renowned humanitarian, conservationist, and animal activist, Dr. Jane Goodall was a little girl with a very special toy chimpanzee named Jubilee. In this brand new musical from the team behind the Kennedy Center’s 2014 production of the *MUTTS*-inspired *The Gift of Nothing*, audiences will join young Jane and her special friend as they learn about the world around them and the importance of protecting all living species. With anecdotes taken directly from Jane Goodall’s autobiography, this adaptation makes this very true story accessible for the very young—and young at heart. *Me... Jane: The Dreams & Adventures of Young Jane Goodall is a part of JFKC: A Centennial Celebration of John F. Kennedy. Most enjoyed by ages 6 and up.*

**Kansas City Ballet: The Nutcracker**
November 22, 24–26, 2017 in the Opera House
Last seen in 2008 as part of *Ballet Across America*, Kansas City Ballet marks its first full engagement at the Kennedy Center in the holiday favorite, *The Nutcracker*. This delightful production, premiered in 2015, is filled with innovative twists including a line of giant Russian stacking dolls and a Hip Hop-dancing father, enchanting choreography by Artistic Director Devon Carney; vibrant, elaborate sets by Alain Vaës; colorful costumes by Holly Hynes, a frequent designer for The Suzanne Farrell Ballet; and lighting by Trad A. Burns. *Most enjoyed by ages 5 and up.*

**NSO Music Family Concert: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets™ In Concert**
November 26, 2017 in the Concert Hall
The *Harry Potter™* film series is a once-in-a-lifetime cultural phenomenon that continues to delight millions of fans around the world. This concert will feature the National Symphony
Orchestra performing every note from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets™*. Audiences will be able to relive the magic of the film in high-definition on a giant screen while hearing the Orchestra perform John Williams’s unforgettable score, led by NSO Principal Pops conductor Steven Reineke. *Harry Potter* characters, names and related indicia are © & ™ Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. J.K. Rowling’s *Wizarding World™* J.K. Rowling and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Publishing Rights © JKR. (s17) *Most enjoyed by ages 5 and up.*

**Washington National Opera: The Little Prince**
December 14–17, 2017 in the Terrace Theater
Continuing its tradition of producing a family opera during the holiday season, WNO presents a revival of its beloved production of *The Little Prince*. Featuring a score by Academy Award® winner Rachel Portman (*Emma*), an English-language libretto by playwright Nicholas Wright (*His Dark Materials*), and direction by WNO Artistic Director Francesca Zambello, this family friendly opera is based on the beloved children’s book by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The cast includes members of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program and also features the return of the WNO Children’s Chorus. The WNO Orchestra is led by opera and musical theater conductor James Lowe in his WNO debut. *Most enjoyed by ages 8 and up.*

**Mr. Popper’s Penguins**
December 22–31, 2017 in the Family Theater
In the small town of Stillwater, painter and decorator Mr. Popper is a pleasant, practical, predictable person who periodically pines for polar adventures. But when a peculiar package on the Poppers’ porch produces a penguin, chaos waddles into their lives. Soon, the Poppers open their home and hearts to not one, not two, but a bunch of boisterous black-and-white birds. With catchy songs and penguin puppets aplenty, Richard and Florence Atwater’s popular book has been adapted into a fresh and funny stage musical by Pins and Needles Productions from the United Kingdom. *Most enjoyed by ages 3 and up.*

**American Ballet Theatre: Whipped Cream**
February 1–4, 2018 in the Opera House
Having received its world premiere in March 2017, the delightful and whimsical production of *Whipped Cream* is based on the two-act ballet with libretto and score by Richard Strauss, originally created as *Schlagobers* (German for “whipped cream”) and first performed in 1924 at the Vienna State Opera. Conveying the tale of a young boy who overindulges at a Viennese pastry shop, the colorful and vibrant sets and costumes feature the designs of pop surrealist Mark Ryden. *Most enjoyed by ages 5 and up.*

**Digging Up Dessa**
February 3–18, 2018 in the Family Theater
Presented as a part of the *Women’s Voices Theatre Festival*, this world premiere Kennedy Center commission by Laura Schellhardt follows young Dessa as she excavates mysteries. After a field trip to a museum reveals that pioneering English paleontologist Mary Anning’s legacy has been buried by history because of her gender and lack of formal education, Dessa decides that she’s going to use her science fair presentation to earn Anning the credit she deserves. With help from her partner Nilo, a rival-turned-friend, Dessa sets to work unearthing the secrets hidden beneath the surface of the past and present—for Mary’s history and her own future. *Most enjoyed by ages 10 and up.*

**NSO Family Concert Let’s Remix the Classix!**
February 18, 2018 in the Concert Hall
NSO Principal Pops Conductor Steven Reineke is joined by Grammy®-nominated beatboxer and multi-instrumentalist Christylez Bacon and wildly original electric cellist/composer Wytold for a program that explores the language of music with a fresh twist. As they experiment with adding a Hip Hop beat to classics, they take audiences on a journey through beatboxing, improvising, and other creative techniques via Pachelbel’s Canon, Bach’s Cello Suite No. 1, and other classical masterpieces heard everywhere from movies to TV to weddings—and make them completely their own. *Most enjoyed by ages 5 and up.*

**NSO Music for Young Audiences: Two Divas and a Bear**
March 4, 2018 in the Family Theater
*Two Divas and a Bear!* are NSO violinist Marissa Regni and soprano Kari Paludan, as well as Diva Bear, who joins them for this program that explores the human voice and helps youngsters discover that the strings of the violin are very similar to our very own vocal cords. Youngsters are encouraged to bring their favorite teddy bear or other stuffed friend. *Most enjoyed by ages 3 and up.*

**Waves, all that Glows Sees**
March 24–April 1, 2018 in the Family Theater
Adults with their little ones follow a pathway of shells and stones into a warm, serene tent, where a gentle seaside scene awaits, in this rare marvel of theater for the very young presented by Canada’s Théâtre Des Confettis. One man makes music, while another dreams of the ocean. Through sand shaping, shadow puppetry, and inventive sound effects, the two performers create tender magical moments of sea turtles, seagulls, fish, dune grass, ships, and sky. As time passes, one of the men plays at diving into the water in search of treasure, bringing a poetic undersea adventure to life before your eyes. *Most enjoyed by 18 months to 4 years of age.*

**NSO Music for Young Audiences: The String Thing**
April 21–22, 2018 in the Family Theater
NSO Bassist Paul DeNola and violinist Heather LeDoux Green take a break from the Orchestra to introduce young audiences to some of the greatest music ever written. Paul and Heather never speak a word, but their instruments speak for themselves as this “silent” comedic tag-team presents a hilarious program of music and mayhem. *Most enjoyed by ages 3 and up.*

**NSO Music for Young Audiences: Brass of Peace**
May 19, 2018 in the Theater Lab
This brass group comprises 13 DC-area high school students performing pieces that just might blow the roof off the theater. Retired NSO hornist Sylvia Alimen conducts these concerts that bring together the city’s finest young brass musicians to teach young audiences all about the instruments of the brass family and how to make music out of metal and wind. *Most enjoyed by ages 3 and up.*

**Ever In The Glades**
June 8–10, 2018 in the Family Theater
On an isolated island deep in the heart of the Everglades, five teenagers struggle to survive in a land where the adults are as dangerous as the gators. When one of the kids returns from juvenile detention to help the rest escape to the mainland, it seems their prayers have been answered. There’s only one problem: they need a boat, and they need it before the adults catch wind of their plan and end it—or end them. *Ever In The Glades,* written by Laura Schellhardt and directed by Rives Collins, makes its highly anticipated return after its breakout workshop performance at the Kennedy Center’s New Visions/New Voices theater festival in
2016. Bringing a more mature element to this season of performances for young audiences, the play begs the question: what is the current generation’s responsibility to the next, and what happens if we fail them? *Most enjoyed by ages 12 and up.*

**Cuesheets**
School and public audiences attending Performances for Young Audiences productions and concerts will receive a *Cuesheet*—an informative performance guide designed for use before and after attending performances. *Cuesheets* contain introductory information, activities, and suggested reading lists appropriate for children to maximize the performing arts experience.

**Ticket Information**
To purchase a subscription, patrons should call the Subscription office at (202) 416-8500 or go to [www.kennedy-center.org/subscriptions](http://www.kennedy-center.org/subscriptions). 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.

**Funding Credits**

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