The John F. Kennedy Center for The Performing Arts
and
Georgetown University
present

Let Freedom Ring!
featuring

VANESSA WILLIAMS
and
THE LET FREEDOM RING CHOIR,
Rev. Nolan Williams Jr., Music Director

In a musical tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Monday, January 15, 2018 at 6 p.m.
in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and
Georgetown University celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a free,
ticketed musical tribute titled

Let Freedom Ring! The annual program, part of the free daily performance series on
the Millennium Stage, features Grammy®–nominated Vanessa Williams and the Let
Freedom Ring Choir led by Music Director Rev. Nolan Williams Jr., on Monday,
January 15, 2018 at 6 p.m. in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall.
Georgetown University will present the 16th annual John Thompson Jr. Legacy of a Dream Award to Steve Park, executive director and founder of Little Lights Urban Ministries. The award is given by Georgetown University to an international or local individual who exemplifies the spirit of Dr. King. For more information about this year’s awardee, please visit: https://www.georgetown.edu/news/steve-park-legacy-of-a-dream-award-recipient-2018.

Free tickets will be distributed up to two per person on a first-come, first-served basis at the entrance to the Hall of Nations, beginning at 4:30 p.m. on January 15. This program will also be live streamed on the Kennedy Center’s website at www.kennedy-center.org.

Critically-acclaimed actress and singer Vanessa Williams is one of the most respected and multi-faceted performers in entertainment today. Conquering musical charts, Broadway, music videos, television, and motion pictures, she has sold millions of albums worldwide and has achieved critical acclaim as an actress on stage, in film, and on television. Her albums The Right Stuff, The Comfort Zone, and The Sweetest Days earned multiple Grammy® nominations.

In 1994, Williams took Broadway by storm in Kiss of the Spider Woman, winning the hearts of critics and becoming a box-office sensation. In 2002, she garnered rave reviews and was nominated for a Tony Award® for her performance as the Witch in the revival of Into the Woods. She also Headlined a limited special engagement of the classic Carmen Jones at the Kennedy Center and starred in the Encore! series staged concert production of St. Louis Woman. After appearing on stage in Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine’s Sondheim on Sondheim, an original Broadway musical that ran in the spring of 2010 at The Roundabout Theatre, Williams returned to the stage in 2013 where she starred alongside Cicely Tyson as Jessie Mae Watts in the Tony®-nominated play The Trip to Bountiful. In early 2014, Williams reprised her role as Jessie Mae for Lifetime’s television adaptation of the Horton Foote classic during Black History Month.
Steve Park started Little Lights Urban Ministries in 1995 without funding or experience in the nonprofit sector, yet more than two decades later, Park has grown the organization to employ 50 full-and-part time staff members, serving 140 students and 300 adults each year. Little Lights prioritizes hiring from the community they serve.

Little Lights primarily works with students and families living in the Potomac Gardens, Hopkins, and Benning Terrace public housing communities, where the average annual income for a family of four is around $12,000. Passionate about taking a holistic approach to poverty, Park has grown Little Lights to provide a diverse range of programs for the entire community focused on academic, spiritual, and economic empowerment, as well as racial justice. At the core of the Little Lights philosophy is the belief that personal relationships and consistent and year-round program intensity are the key to long-term impact.

As part of Georgetown University’s “Let Freedom Ring” initiative, this event builds on the success of the first joint program in January 2003, which featured the legendary Roberta Flack and attracted more than 5,000 patrons. The second, held in August of 2003, commemorated the 40th anniversary of Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech and featured actor, civil rights leader, and 2004 Kennedy Center Honoree Ossie Davis. Past concerts have featured Jessye Norman in 2004; Aaron Neville in 2005; Yolanda Adams in 2006 and in 2016; Brian McKnight in 2007; Denyce Graves in 2008; Kennedy Center Honoree Aretha Franklin in 2009; India.Arie in 2010; Patti LaBelle in 2011; Bobby McFerrin in 2012; Smokey Robinson in 2013; Dionne Warwick in 2014; Natalie Cole in 2015; and Gladys Knight in 2017.

**Free tickets are required.** Beginning at 4:30 p.m. on January 15, 2018, tickets will be distributed up to two (2) per person in line on a first-come, first-served basis. Tickets are based on reserved seats and are subject to availability. Please enter through the Hall of Nations. Overflow seating will be available at Millennium Stage North (near
Eisenhower Theater) for patrons to view a simulcast of the performance. Note: Standard parking rates apply when attending free performances.

**Georgetown University** is the oldest and largest Catholic and Jesuit university in America, founded in 1789 by Archbishop John Carroll. Georgetown today is a major student-centered, international, research university offering respected undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs in Washington, D.C., Doha, Qatar, and around the world. For more information about Georgetown University, visit [http://georgetown.edu](http://georgetown.edu). Georgetown’s annual Let Freedom Ring initiative honors Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through a series of academic, artistic, and extracurricular programs that examine Dr. King’s life and work, and address the contemporary challenges our nation faces in order to fulfill his dream of justice and equality for all people. A link to the University’s full schedule of events this year is available at [http://georgetown.edu/mlk](http://georgetown.edu/mlk).

**ABOUT THE KENNEDY CENTER MILLENNIUM STAGE**

Millennium Stage embodies the Kennedy Center mission and vision, inviting audiences to celebrate our collective cultural heritage in an inclusive, accessible way. Millennium Stage, now in its 21st season, explores countless artistic styles and inspires the community to engage in the performing arts. Welcoming local, national, and international artists, the Kennedy Center’s Millennium Stage is the only U.S. institution that presents a free performance, 365 days a year at 6 p.m., streamed live on the internet.

**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 Kim Engel and Family, The Gessner Family Foundation, The Isadore and Bertha Gudelsky Family Foundation, Inc., The Meredith Foundation, The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Dr. Deborah*

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.

For more information about the Kennedy Center visit www.kennedy-center.org.

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