FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 
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The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announces its

Hip Hop Culture Council

Founding Members Expand Hip Hop’s Presence At The Kennedy Center

Members include Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson, Bobbito García a.k.a Kool Bob Love, Common, Fab 5 Freddy, Grandmaster Caz, Grant Hill, J.PERIOD, Jason King, Kierna Mayo, Large Professor, LL COOL J, MC Lyte, Mimi Valdés, Pharoahe Monch, Robert Glasper, Tariq “Black Thought” Trotter, Xavier “X” Jernigan, and 9th Wonder

Upcoming events featuring council members include:

Wild Style 35th Anniversary Film Screening and Discussion + Party

Robert Glasper, Common, and Karriem Riggins present August Greene in a one-night-only performance in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall

ROCK RUBBER 45s
D.C. Film Premiere + Party
Featuring DJs Rich Medina, Stretch Armstrong, DJ Spinna, and Bobbito García spinning together for the first-time ever

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today announced the inception of its Hip Hop Culture Council. The Council will serve to help the Kennedy Center create new pathways and deepen public knowledge of Hip Hop,
contribute to broader Center-wide initiatives, and strengthen the burgeoning Hip Hop Culture program at the Kennedy Center.

“The Kennedy Center’s Hip Hop Culture Council reflects the creative, social, and intellectual wealth of the Hip Hop community,” said Q-Tip, Artistic Director of Hip Hop Culture. “The members are the embodiment of what we stand for and all that we aspire to achieve with the Hip Hop Culture program.”

Serving as advisors and ambassadors, the founding council members form a dynamic community of prominent visionaries who will lend their talents and expertise in support of Hip Hop Culture at the Kennedy Center. Beginning this spring, members of the Council will lend their voices and ideas to help create, experiment, develop, and produce work at the Center.

“We are thrilled to be collaborating with such an extraordinary group of icons, innovators, and contributors to the Culture,” said Simone Eccleston, Director of Hip Hop Culture and Contemporary Music. “Q-Tip is deeply invested in creating a brain trust to advance and expand our work. As we continue to build the complex ecosystem that supports this program, the Council becomes an integral piece in sustaining Hip Hop’s presence at the Center.”

FOUNDING HIP HOP CULTURE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson, Drummer, Co-Founder – The Roots, DJ, Producer, Author, and Lecturer
Bobby García a.k.a Kool Bob Love, DJ, Filmmaker, TV/Radio Personality, Author, and Ballplayer
Common, Emcee, Actor, Poet, and Film Producer
Fab 5 Freddy, Artist, Filmmaker, and Hip Hop Pioneer
Grandmaster Caz, Emcee, DJ, Historian, and Hip Hop Culture Ambassador and Pioneer
Grant Hill, Owner/Vice-Chairman Atlanta Hawks, TNT/NBATV/CBS Broadcaster, and seven-time NBA All-Star
J.PERIOD, DJ, Producer, and Musical Storyteller
Jason King, Ph.D., Associate Professor, and Director of Global Studies, New York University’s Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music

Kierna Mayo, Writer, Brand Architect, Media Visionary, and Senior Vice President of Content and Brands at iOne Digital

Large Professor, Emcee, Producer, and DJ

LL COOL J, Emcee, Actor, Author, Entrepreneur, and 2017 Kennedy Center Honoree

MC Lyte, Emcee, DJ, Actress, Entertainer, Speaker, and Philanthropist

Mimi Valdés, Producer, and Chief Creative Officer at i am OTHER Entertainment

Pharoahe Monch, Emcee, Recording Artist, and Producer

Robert Glasper, Pianist, Composer, and Producer

Tariq “Black Thought” Trotter, Emcee, Co-Founder – The Roots, and Actor

Xavier “X” Jernigan, Head of North America, Shows, and Editorial and Host of Showstopper for Spotify

9th Wonder, Producer, DJ, College Lecturer, and Social Activist

Initial projects and programs featuring council members will include a celebration of Hip Hop’s first motion picture, Wild Style, directed by Charlie Ahearn with a 35th anniversary film screening and discussion featuring council members Fab 5 Freddy and Grandmaster Caz in the Terrace Theater, Friday, March 16. Founding council members and Grammy® award-winning pianist Robert Glasper and award-winning emcee Common, with groupmate world-renowned drummer Karriem Riggins, come together in their first live public performance after the release of their self-titled debut album, August Greene, in the Kennedy Center’s Concert Hall, Thursday, March 29.

Bobbito García a.k.a Kool Bob Love will also present the U.S. film premiere of ROCK RUBBER 45s—an autobiographical cinematic odyssey exploring the connectivity of global basketball, sneaker, and music lifestyle. The film, screened in the Terrace Theater on Friday, June 22, explores García’s youth dealing with mistreatment, identity, and loss as well as his ascension to self-determination as an adult freelance creative.

“Being invited to be a founding member of the Hip Hop Culture Council bears a ton of responsibility” said Bobbito García. “We will ensure that there is no compromise to the art form and that it is presented in all its wonder and beauty for all to enjoy.”
About Hip Hop Culture at the Kennedy Center

With Hip Hop Culture serving as one of our nation’s greatest cultural assets and ambassadors, the Hip Hop Culture program at the Kennedy Center recognizes Hip Hop’s contributions to global culture and its power to build and transform communities through art and action. Through this programmatic platform, the Center aims to create a dynamic home for Hip Hop Culture and celebrate Hip Hop’s role as a catalyst for innovation, exploration, and transformation with a dynamic mix of performances, humanities events, film screenings, workshops and interactive experiences, in person and online. In 2016, the Kennedy Center appointed iconic rapper, producer, and DJ Q-Tip as its first Artistic Director of Hip Hop Culture. In 2017, LL COOL J was the first Hip Hop artist to receive a Kennedy Center Honor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Dates</th>
<th>Theater</th>
<th>Show</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 9–10, 2018</td>
<td>Family Theater</td>
<td>Chinaka Hodge’s <em>Chasing Mehserle</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16, 2018</td>
<td>Terrace Theater</td>
<td><em>Wild Style</em> 35th Anniversary Film Screening + Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16, 2018</td>
<td>Atrium</td>
<td><em>Wild Style</em> Dance Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29, 2018</td>
<td>Concert Hall</td>
<td>August Greene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7, 2018</td>
<td>Eisenhower Theater</td>
<td><em>Between The World and Me</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 22, 2018</td>
<td>Terrace Theater</td>
<td><em>ROCK RUBBER 45s: Film Premiere + Party</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 22, 2018</td>
<td>Atrium</td>
<td><em>ROCK RUBBER 45s Dance Party</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hip Hop Culture Schedule:**

*Artists and performances are subject to change.*

**Critical Breaks Reading Series: Chinaka Hodge’s Chasing Mehserle**

March 9–10, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. in the Family Theater

*Chasing Mehserle* is a performance piece that maps the city of Oakland’s changing demographics, morphing culture, gentrification, and the communal response to the real-life tragedy of Oscar Grant. A sequel to Chinaka Hodge’s first play *Mirrors in Every Corner*, *Chasing Mehserle* examines race, class, gender, and privilege through the lens of a fictional character, Watts, who is traumatized after seeing the Rodney King beatings as a child. He makes a New Year’s resolution to finally face his trauma on January 1, 2009, the same day Oscar Grant is murdered by transit officer Johannes Mehserle.
Chasing Mehserle was originally commissioned by Black Women’s Playwrights Group and co-presented by Intersection for the Arts, Hip Hop Theater Fest, The Living Word Project, and MIT’s Media Lab.

**Wild Style 35th Anniversary Film Screening, Discussion and Demo**
**Featuring Charlie Ahearn, Fab 5 Freddy, Grandmaster Caz, Busy Bee, and Grand Wizard Theodore**
March 16, 2018 at 7 p.m. in the Terrace Theater
In celebration of the 35th anniversary of the New Directors/New Film Screening of Wild Style, join Director Charlie Ahearn and special guests for a screening of Hip Hop’s first motion picture. Featuring seminal figures of the era, such as Fab Five Freddy, Lee Quinones, Lady Pink, the Rock Steady Crew, The Cold Crush Brothers, Queen Lisa Lee of Zulu Nation, and Grandmaster Flash, *Wild Style* documents the rise of early Hip Hop.

The screening includes a post-show discussion facilitated by Charlie Ahearn along with special guests Fab 5 Freddy, Grandmaster Caz, and Busy Bee, as well as DJ demo by Grand Wizard Theodore, the inventor of the Scratch technique.

**Come Early:** Arrive at 6:30pm to catch the “Scratch Ecstasy” slide show, which served as the rough storyboard for what would later become *Wild Style*, with a super-mix by Grand Wizard Theodore.

**Stay late:** Join us for a *Wild Style* themed dance party with guest DJ sets and performances by Grand Wizard Theodore and Grandmaster Caz.

**In the Beginning Dance Party: Wild Style Dance Party featuring Grand Wizard Theodore and Grandmaster Caz**
March 16, 2018 at 9 p.m. in the Terrace Gallery
Join us as the legendary Grand Wizard Theodore and Grandmaster Caz spin signature sets celebrating the 35th Anniversary of the New Directors/New Film Screening of *Wild Style*. This free dance party series showcases pioneers and today’s leading DJs sharing their distinct voices and sonic interpretations of the beginnings of Hip Hop.

**August Greene**
March 29 at 8 p.m. in the Concert Hall
The perfect marriage of jazz, Hip Hop, and soul, August Greene is the newly formed super group featuring Chicago-born emcee Common, Houston-born pianist and composer Robert Glasper, and Detroit drummer and producer Karriem Riggins. A synthesis of each artist’s talents into one cohesive project, August Greene is fluid in terms of sound and meditative offering that speaks to those pushing through the dark for brighter days. In the first live public performance after dropping their self-titled debut album, *August Greene*, the band will deliver the ethereal sounds of Glasper on the piano, coupled with Riggins’s impeccable drumming, Common’s honest lyrics, with Burniss Travis on bass, and Samora Pinderhughes on additional keyboards and vocals.

**Between The World and Me**
April 7, 2018 at 8 p.m. in the Eisenhower Theater
In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates’s *Between the World and Me* offers a powerful framework for understanding our nation’s history and current crisis.

The live performance event will be a presentation of excerpted selections, read monologue-style by notable guest artists, with newly composed music by Kennedy Center Artistic Director
of Jazz and MacArthur Genius Award recipient Jason Moran (Selma and Netflix’s 13th), direction by Apollo Executive Producer Kamilah Forbes (Broadway's Stickfly, NBC’s “The Wiz”), and interactive visual storytelling by projection media artists. Commissioned and produced by the Apollo Theater and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

**ROCK RUBBER 45s: D.C. Film Premiere + Party**
June 22, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. in the Terrace Theater
*ROCK RUBBER 45s* is a cinematic odyssey exploring the connectivity of global basketball, sneaker, and music lifestyle through the firsthand lens of authentic NYC culture orchestrator Bobbito García. The film explores García’s youth dealing with mistreatment, educational quandaries, identity, and loss as well as his ascension to self-determination as an adult freelance creative. The ballplayer/author/DJ/filmmaker has carved an independent career that has inspired millions throughout the world and has affected the growth and direction of the footwear, Hip Hop, and sports industries.

**Stay late:** Join us for a *ROCK RUBBER 45s* afterparty with guest DJ sets by Rich Medina, Stretch Armstrong, Spinna, and Bobbito García.

**ROCK RUBBER 45s Afterparty featuring DJs Rich Medina, Stretch Armstrong, Spinna, and Bobbito García**
June 22, 2018 at 9 p.m. in the Terrace Gallery
Join us as legendary DJs Rich Medina, Stretch Armstrong, Spinna and Bobbito García spin together for the first time ever as part of the *ROCK RUBBER 45s* D.C. film premiere.

**Ticket Information**
Tickets will be available to Kennedy Center members on Tuesday, March 6 and to the general public on Thursday, March 8. Tickets start at $20. Patrons wishing to purchase tickets can do so by calling the Instant Charge office at (202) 467-4600 or by visiting www.kennedy-center.org

For more information about the Kennedy Center, visit [www.kennedy-center.org](http://www.kennedy-center.org).

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