Press Release

April 10, 2018

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Artistic Advisor at Large Renée Fleming announce programming for the 2018-2019 season of

Renée Fleming

VOICES

Third season of series showcases the beauty, power, and diversity of the human voice

Featured artists include Meow Meow, Christopher Jackson, Robert Fairchild, Youssou N’Dour, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Nellie McKay, Jamie Barton, and Patina Miller

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Artistic Advisor at Large Renée Fleming today announce the schedule of performances for the 2018-2019 Renée Fleming VOICES series, marking its third season celebrating the power of the voice across a wide range of genres.

The series’s 2018-2019 season includes performances by outstanding artists from a wide range of genres including Broadway, jazz, pop, and opera, as well as artists who defy categorization. The modern cabaret style of Meow Meow opens the series in September, followed by Hamilton’s Christopher Jackson, dancer/actor/vocalist Robert Fairchild, Senegalese artist Youssou N’Dour, jazz sensation Cécile McLorin Salvant, folk/pop stage artist Nellie McKay, opera star Jamie Barton, and Broadway/TV/film star Patina Miller.

~ more ~
“The range of human vocal expression is virtually limitless—there are as many kinds of voices as there are kinds of people. My goal for this new series at the Kennedy Center is to celebrate the best singing in styles that may be familiar, and also to expose audiences to types of vocal music that might be totally new to them,” says Ms. Fleming. “From the classical song recital, to cabaret, bluegrass, rap, and world music, the common thread will be vocalism of exceptional quality or innovation, representing a diverse range of styles.”

Following are the details of the 2018–2019 season of Renée Fleming VOICES, with commentary from Ms. Fleming on why she personally selected each artist for the series.

**Meow Meow**  
Saturday, September 15, 2018, at 7:30 p.m.  
Terrace Theater  
“If your idea of cabaret is a smoky-voiced chanteuse crooning at a microphone, prepare to have your preconceptions exploded. A performer who gleefully tramples the barriers of genre, Meow Meow defies easy description. In an artistic space of her own creation, encompassing cabaret, art song, vaudeville, and performance art, she has tackled Schumann, Shakespeare, Kurt Weill, Fiona Apple, and crowd-surfing. The idea of the Diva is central to her stage persona, but Meow Meow presents a post-modern take on that identity, often battling wildly comic mishaps, or catastrophes. Her shows may be moving, hilarious, or even shocking, but you can be sure she is never dull.”

**Christopher Jackson**  
Saturday, September 29, 2018, at 7:30 p.m.  
Terrace Theater  
Co-presented with KC’s Theater Series  
“Christopher Jackson is the rare kind of actor/singer whose powerful voice and presence are compelling in any medium. I was fortunate to see his Tony®-nominated performance as George Washington in Hamilton, and thrilled to have shared the stage with him last year at the National Memorial Day Concert and at the Kennedy Center celebrating JFK’s Centennial. Whether acting on television, voicing the Chief in the Disney film Moana, or composing music for everyone from LL Cool J to Sesame Street (for which he won an Emmy Award®), Chris is a creative dynamo, and I can’t wait for audiences to hear him in the intimacy of the Terrace Theater.”
Robert Fairchild
Friday, October 12, 2018, at 7:30 p.m.
Terrace Theater
Co-presented with KC’s Theater Series
“Robbie Fairchild is one of the rare breed of artists who can truly be described as a “triple threat”—a world-class dancer, consummate vocalist, and compelling actor—a combination I think of as a uniquely American innovation, like the Broadway musical. First an acclaimed principal dancer with the New York City Ballet, he then dazzled Broadway with his Tony®-nominated performance in An American in Paris, which I count myself fortunate to have seen. On top of these achievements, he’s also a talented choreographer, most recently with the world-premiere, Off-Broadway adaptation of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, in which he also starred. Any chance to see a performer with all of these gifts is not to be missed.”

Youssou N’Dour
Tuesday, October 30, 2018, at 8 p.m.
Concert Hall
“Applauded around the world as one of the most beloved African musicians of our time, singer-songwriter Youssou N’Dour is an inspiring example of the power of the artist’s voice in society. Known as the “King of Mbalax,” the popular music of Senegal, he has helped expand traditional music into a style that is completely modern, and an affirming expression of national identity. Similarly, through his work as a politician and media innovator, he has also evolved the centuries-old West African tradition of the Griot: a troubadour, poet, and historian with a special place in the community. To me, Youssou N’Dour embodies John F. Kennedy’s belief that the life of the arts is close to the center of a nation’s purpose.”

Cécile McLorin Salvant
Saturday, November 17, 2018, time TBD
Terrace Theater
Co-presented with KC’s Jazz Series
“Cécile McLorin Salvant embodies one of the things I love most about jazz—this limitless potential to absorb any song or musical idea, and re-imagine it as something fresh and totally individual. Her influences are wide-ranging, from Hip Hop and Cuban music to studying baroque music in France. She is a brilliant programmer of song—truly a curator of art song—challenging her audience with relevant themes from the status of women to racism. Little wonder that she has been showered with awards, including First Prize in the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition and two Grammy Awards® for Best Jazz Vocal Album. And because I love artists who expand the repertoire, I am thrilled that both of those albums include both jazz standards and original compositions.”
Nellie McKay  
Friday, February 8, 2019, at 7:30 p.m.  
Terrace Theater  
“I admire any artist with the strength of vision to chart and follow her own creative path, and it’s hard to imagine a better example than singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist Nellie McKay. Her sweet voice and innocent demeanor mask a singular ability to wield the catchiest popular music idioms of the last century in the service of a fiercely independent intellect. Her performances are thought-provoking, emotionally affecting, and fun, and I’m pleased that we are bringing her to the Terrace Theater.”

Jamie Barton  
Saturday, March 23, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.  
Terrace Theater  
“From the classical world, where virtuosity and technique are developed to Olympic standards, mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton is a singer of such spectacular gifts that she has won virtually every top award there is: the Richard Tucker Prize, the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World, and the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, to name but three. And her star is still rising. Jamie’s powerful, sumptuously beautiful voice, combined with her personal warmth and artistic intelligence, make her performances unforgettable; and I expect that the opportunity to hear her in an intimate space like the Terrace Theater will become even rarer as she continues to conquer the world’s great opera houses.”

Patina Miller  
Saturday, April 27, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.  
Terrace Theater  
Co-presented with KC’s Theater Series  
“The word “powerhouse” is often used to describe performers, but Patina is a case where it really applies. She lit up Broadway stages in the lead role of the 2011 musical Sister Act, but the first time I heard her was in her Tony Award®-winning performance as the Leading Player in the 2013 Broadway revival of Pippin. In a role traditionally performed by a man, Patina’s thrilling voice and powerful stage presence made a huge impression on me. She has branched out to television and film stardom with roles in Madame Secretary and The Hunger Games, but I can’t wait for audiences to experience her voice and energy in live performance at the Terrace Theater.”

For more information, go to https://www.kennedy-center.org/calendar/series/rfv

**TICKET INFORMATION**  
Subscriptions for the Renée Fleming VOICES series are on sale now. To purchase a subscription, patrons should visit the Box Office, call the Subscription Office at (202) 416-8500, or go to www.kennedy-center.org/subscribe. 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.
ABOUT RENÉE FLEMING

Renée Fleming is one of the most acclaimed singers of our time. In 2016, she was named an Artistic Advisor at Large for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where she participates in a variety of projects. In 2013, President Obama awarded her America’s highest honor for an artist, the National Medal of Arts. She brought her voice to a vast new audience in 2014, as the first classical artist ever to sing the National Anthem at the Super Bowl. Winner of the 2013 Grammy Award® for Best Classical Vocal Solo, She has sung for momentous occasions from the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony to the Diamond Jubilee Concert for Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace. An earlier distinction came in 2008 when she became the first woman in the 125-year history of the Metropolitan Opera to solo headline an opening night gala.

Her 2016-2017 tour schedule includes concerts in San Francisco, Toronto, Boston, Budapest, Paris, Madrid, and Tokyo. This season she appeared as the Marschallin in a new production of Strauss’s Der Rosenkavalier at the Royal Opera House, and she will be seen in the same role when the production premieres at the Metropolitan Opera this spring.

Known for bringing new audiences to classical music and opera, she has sung not only with Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo, and Andrea Bocelli, but also with Elton John, Paul Simon, Sting, Lou Reed, Josh Groban, and Joan Baez. She has hosted a wide variety of television and radio broadcasts, including the Metropolitan Opera’s Live in HD series and Live from Lincoln Center. Her book The Inner Voice was published by Viking Penguin in 2004, and is currently in its 14th paperback printing. In 2013, she joined the Kennedy Center to present American Voices, a concert and three-day festival celebrating the best American singing in all genres, that became the subject of a Great Performances documentary on PBS.

She won her fourth Grammy Award® for her album Poèmes. Her most recent album, Distant Light, was recorded with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and released in January by Decca. It features Barber’s Knoxville: Summer of 1915, The Strand Settings, composed for her by Anders Hillborg, as well as songs by Bjork in new orchestral arrangements. Recipient of 14 Grammy® nominations to date, she has recorded everything from complete operas and song recitals indie rock, jazz, and the movie soundtrack of The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King.

In 2010, she was named the first-ever creative consultant at Lyric Opera of Chicago. She is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Hall Corporation, the Board of Sing for Hope, and the Artistic Advisory Board of the Polyphony Foundation.

Among her awards are the Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal, Germany’s Cross of the Order of Merit, Sweden’s Polar Music Prize, France’s Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur, and honorary doctorates from Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, Duke University, Carnegie Mellon University, the Eastman School of Music, and The Juilliard School.


ABOUT THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is America’s living memorial to President Kennedy. Under the guidance of Chairman David M. Rubenstein and President Deborah F. Rutter, the nine theaters and stages of the nation’s busiest performing arts facility attract more than three million visitors to more than 2,000 performances each year, while Center-related touring productions, television, and radio broadcasts reach 40 million more around the world.
The Center produces and presents performances of music, dance, comedy, and theater; supports artists in the creation of new work; and serves the nation as a leader in arts education. With its artistic affiliates, the National Symphony Orchestra and Washington National Opera, the Center has produced more than 300 theatrical productions and dozens of new ballets, operas, and musical works, in addition to hosting numerous international cultural festivals. The Center’s Emmy® and Peabody Award-winning The Kennedy Center Honors is broadcast annually on CBS and annual The Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize for American Humor is broadcast on PBS.

The education programs of the Kennedy Center, including those of its affiliate VSA, the international organization on arts and disability, have become models for communities across the country and have unlocked the door to learning for millions of young people. Education at the Kennedy Center produces and presents age appropriate performances and educational events, and fosters innovative programming, curriculum, and professional development for students, teachers, and families.

The Center and its affiliates stage more than 400 free performances by artists from throughout the world each year on the Center’s main stages, and every day of the year at 6 p.m. on its Millennium Stages, which are also streamed live, online. The Center also offers reduced and complimentary tickets to young people, active members of the military, and the underserved through its MyTix program and offers a Specially Priced Tickets program for students, seniors, persons with disabilities, and others with fixed low incomes.

To learn more about the Kennedy Center, please visit kennedy-center.org.

Discover the Kennedy Center on social media:

Facebook | Twitter | Instagram | YouTube | Tumblr | Snapchat

#KenCenVOICES

FUNDING CREDITS

Renée Fleming VOICES is made possible through the extraordinary generosity of the Charles E. Smith Family Foundation.

Additional support is provided by the Buffy and William Cafritz Family Foundation.

Theater at the Kennedy Center is made possible by Adrienne Arsht.

Major support for Musical Theater at the Kennedy Center is provided by the Drutz Family Fund for Musical Theater.

The Kennedy Center Theater Season is sponsored by Altria Group.

Support for Jazz at the Kennedy Center is generously provided by Elizabeth and C. Michael Kojaian.
PRESS CONTACT
Sabrina Skacan
(202) 416-8453
skskacan@kennedy-center.org

TICKETS & INFORMATION
(202) 467-4600; (800) 444-1324
www.kennedy-center.org/