



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 7, 2018

**The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
announces
participants selected to the
20TH ANNUAL
*BETTY CARTER'S JAZZ AHEAD***

**Career development program for aspiring jazz musicians brings
25 performers from around the world
to the Kennedy Center, May 29 to June 9, 2018**

**Young musicians will present free performances on
the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, June 7–9, 2018**

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today announced the participants in *Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead* (BCJA)—the international jazz residency, performance, and composition project discovering and presenting the next generation of jazz greats—to be held May 29–June 9, 2018 at the Kennedy Center. Led by Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz Jason Moran, the *Jazz Ahead* program identifies outstanding, emerging jazz artists and composers in their mid-teens to age 25, and brings them together under the tutelage of experienced artists/instructors who coach and counsel them, polishing their performance, composing, and arranging skills.

A total of 25 talented young musicians from the United States, Israel, Russia, Canada, Germany, and the U.K. were selected by a competitive audition process. Joining Moran to lead the residency are seven renowned jazz artists who were mentored by Betty Carter: vocalist and NEA Jazz Master Dee Dee Bridgewater, trumpeter Darren Barrett, pianist Xavier Davis, bassist Reuben Rogers, saxophonist Mark Shim, percussionist Ralph Peterson, and guitarist Mark Whitfield. The 2018 BCJA program

culminates in three separate concerts on the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, June 7–9, 2018 at 6 p.m., in which the graduates will perform original compositions. The free performances are open to the public, and will be broadcast live on the [Kennedy Center website](#) and archived for subsequent access.

Betty Carter founded *Jazz Ahead* as a vehicle to foster the musical talents of future generations of jazz artists. She originally developed the program in 1993 at 651, an arts center in Brooklyn. In 1997, the late Dr. Billy Taylor (Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz, 1994-2010) invited Carter to bring *Jazz Ahead* to Washington, D.C. The inaugural class of Kennedy Center *Jazz Ahead* students presented an unforgettable concert with Carter herself joining them on the Kennedy Center Concert Hall stage. Jason Moran, then a young pianist from Houston, was selected by Carter to be a student in this first year at Kennedy Center. *Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead* had a new home and Carter was filled with hope for the future of the program. After Carter's untimely death in September 1998, the Carter family graciously granted the Kennedy Center the opportunity to continue her legacy by making the program an annual Kennedy Center event.

Distinguished alumni from *Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead* include pianists Jason Moran, Matthew Whitaker, and Aaron Parks; guitarist Lage Lund; trombonist Andre Hayward; bassist Ameen Saleem; violinist Miri Ben-Ari; vocalists Charenee Wade, Grace Kelly, and Jazzmeia Horn; saxophonists Marcus Strickland and Jon Irabagon, and drummer Jamison Ross, among others.

Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead 2018 Participants

NAME	INSTRUMENT	HOME
Tristan H. Cappel	Alto Saxophone	Michigan
Thomas Kelley	Alto Saxophone	Florida
Henry Solomon	Alto Saxophone	California
Emiliano Lasansky	Bass	New York
Stephen Arnold	Bass	Washington D.C.
Niklas Lukassen	Bass	Germany

Avery Logan	Drums	Massachusetts
Samvel Sarkisyan	Drums	Russia
Kweku Sumbry	Drums	District of Columbia
Tal Ardit	Guitar	Israel
Ben Turner	Guitar	New Jersey
Samantha Langstein	Piano	New York
Paul Cornish	Piano	California
Chase Morrin	Piano	Massachusetts
Alex Francoeur	Tenor Saxophone	Canada
Ryan Mulder	Tenor Saxophone	North Carolina
Jack Kotze	Trombone	New York
Ting Yang (Brandon) Lin	Trombone	Canada
Armando Vergara	Trombone	New York
John Michael Bradford	Trumpet	Louisiana
Nathan W Kay	Trumpet	New York
Sasha Berliner	Vibraphone	New York
Erik Leuthäuser	Voice	Germany
Chloe Youtsey	Voice	Virginia
Cherise Adams-Burnett	Voice	United Kingdom

ABOUT KENNEDY CENTER JAZZ

Kennedy Center Jazz, under the leadership of Artistic Director Jason Moran, presents legendary artists who have helped shape the art form, artists who are emerging on the jazz scene, and innovative multidisciplinary projects throughout the year. The KC Jazz Club, launched in 2002 and dubbed “the future of the jazz nightclub” by *JazzTimes*, hosts many of these artists in an intimate setting; while the Crossroads Club, launched in 2012, is a nightclub dance venue. Annual Kennedy Center jazz events include the professional development residency program for young artists, *Betty Carter’s Jazz Ahead*; NPR’s *A Jazz Piano Christmas*, the Kennedy Center holiday tradition shared by millions around the country via broadcast on NPR; and *Celebrate Mary Lou Williams*, created in 1996 by the late Dr. Billy Taylor (Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz, 1994–2010). The Center co-produces the annual NEA Jazz Masters Tribute Concerts, celebrating iconic figures in the music.

FUNDING CREDITS

Betty Carter’s Jazz Ahead is made possible through the generous support of The King-White Family Foundation and Dr. J. Douglas White and by The William N. Cafritz Jazz Initiative.

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.

The Centene Charitable Foundation is the Presenting Sponsor of *Millennium Stage*.

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 support is provided by Bernstein Family Foundation, Kimberly Engel and Family-The Dennis and Judy Engel Charitable Foundation, The Gressner Family Foundation, The Irene Pollin Audience Development and Community Engagement Initiatives, The Isadore and Bertha Gudelsky Family Foundation, Inc., The Meredith Foundation, Dr. Deborah Rose and Dr. Jan A.J. Stolwijk, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Committee for the Performing Arts and the Millennium Stage Endowment Fund.

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*.

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