



Press Release

March 28, 2019

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

**2019–2020 Season:
PERFORMANCES FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES**

Three Kennedy Center World Premiere Commissions

Kid Prince and Pablo

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! (The Musical)

Dreamer: A South African Journey

Five Productions from The Netherlands

GET'M, EGG-tion Hero, Balancing Bodies, Glimpse,

Pokon: An Unstoppable Game of Growth

**Music Programs Featuring
Musicians From the National Symphony Orchestra**

***New Visions/New Voices 2020
and more!***

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today announces its 2019–2020 season of Performances for Young Audiences designed to inspire and engage audiences both young and young at heart. The upcoming season includes three Kennedy Center–produced world premiere stage productions, five productions hailing from The Netherlands, a Family Look-In performance of the Washington National Opera’s *The Magic Flute*, and original Music for Young Audiences programs showcasing various musical genres, with some programs featuring musicians from the National Symphony Orchestra.

~ more ~

As previously announced, beloved *New York Times* best-selling author and illustrator Mo Willems has become the Kennedy Center's first-ever Education Artist-in-Residence. As a part of his two-year residency, Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences (KCTYA) will produce the world premiere of ***Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! (The Musical)***, based on Willems's Caldecott Honor book. Following its November premiere, the musical, one of four announced Kennedy Center projects spearheaded by Willems, will then embark on a national tour. A previously announced world premiere concert adaptation of Willems's book ***Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs (a Symphonic Spectacular)***, in partnership with the National Symphony Orchestra, will be written and directed by Willems with an original score by NSO Artistic Advisor Ben Folds. The Center will also produce world premiere commissions of ***Kid Prince and Pablo***, a digital age Hip Hop story based on Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* written by and starring two-time Joseph Jefferson Award winner and two-time Drama Desk Award nominee Brian Quijada, and ***Dreamer: A South African Journey***, from director and playwright Zoey Martinson and South African born songwriter Tuelo Minah, drawing on Minah's own life as inspiration.

The upcoming season's presented works will feature five productions from The Netherlands. These exciting multi-genre productions are presented with support from Dutch Performing Arts in collaboration with the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in New York as a part of their program, *Never Grow Up!*, which promotes Dutch film, literature, and performing arts for young audiences in the United States. From dance/theater company Woest comes ***Balancing Bodies***, an interactive show in which the audience sits among the dancers on rolling chairs. In ***Get'M***, by theater company Bontehond, audiences are invited to laugh along as a television show goes uproariously wrong. ***EGG-tion Hero***, created by dance/theater company Maas, lets the audience bear witness to a raucous attempt to keep a special egg safe in a museum gallery. The musicians of Oorkaan mix jazzy melodies with bright visuals in ***Glimpse*** to explore an enchanted world where music, artist, images, and technology interact with one another. Lastly, ***Pokon: An Unstoppable Game of Growth***, from dance company De Dansers, is an exuberant ode to playing for children and adults who just can't keep still.

Other presented works in the 2019–2020 season include exciting theater, music, and dance from around the country and the world: ***Yao Yao*** from South Korea's Brush Theatre; popular music group ***1 2 3 Andrés***; D.C. favorite Tia Shearer in St. Louis, Missouri-based Metro Theater

Company's one woman ***The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus*** by Eric Coble; and ***Havana Hop***, written and performed by Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Paige Hernandez.

In addition to the previously announced NSO Family concerts, the Kennedy Center will also offer three NSO Music for Young Audiences concerts that explore classical music through storytelling. ***Peter and Friends*** is a wild adventure developed specifically for toddlers featuring puppets and a quintet of woodwind and brass instruments from the National Symphony Orchestra. Audience members play like ducks, catch a wicked wolf, and engage with music along the way. Inspired by Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, this production is presented in collaboration with Atlanta, Georgia's TELLER PRODUCTIONS. ***Beauty and the Beat*** features NSO violinist Marissa Regni and NSO percussionist Eric Shin as they join forces in an exciting new program that takes families on a melodic ride exploring the harmonies two very different instruments can create. Eric has a vast assortment of percussion instruments, and Marissa will demonstrate the violin's versatility, both proving that no matter how different the instruments may seem, they can come together to make some beautiful music. Finally, ***Mozart Mash-up*** is an energetic program that features a string quartet of members of the National Symphony Orchestra playing their favorites from the legendary composer.

Programmed to take full advantage of the intimate, immersive spaces in the REACH, several performances for Young Audiences programs in the 2019-2020 season—*Dreamer: A South African Journey*, *Get'M*, *EGG-tion Hero*, and *Peter and Friends*—will take place in the Kennedy Center's expanded campus. Additionally, *Kid Prince and Pablo* and Mo Willems's various projects are among the work that will crossover into the new REACH Moonshot Studio (opening September 2019), a space dedicated to the exploration of learning and creativity through artmaking. Open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., this drop-in space features hands-on learning experiences where visitors of all ages can spend time "trying on" art forms, exploring stories and themes from the Center's stages, and enjoying the process of creating their own works of art. The Center's first-ever expansion will open to the public on September 7, 2019, with a two-week-long celebration that features free campus-wide activities, indoor and outdoor performances and events, and extensive opportunities for the public to explore Washington's newest cultural destination.

After two successful seasons of workshops, ***Sound Health: Second Saturdays*** will continue. Every second Saturday of the month, a local arts organization offers two 45-minute workshops that take place at 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. in the Grand Foyer. This series of free workshops is

designed to help families with young children explore the power of the arts through the body and mind.

The Kennedy Center's biennial festival dedicated to the development of new plays and musicals for young people and their families, ***New Visions/New Voices***, will return in May 2020. For more than 30 years, this innovative series has pioneered a unique and vital forum for the field of Theater for Young Audiences (TYA).

2019–2020 Performances for Young Audiences Schedule

Performance Dates	Theater	Show
October 19–November 3, 2019	Family Theater	<i>Kid Prince and Pablo</i>
October 20, 2019	Concert Hall	NSO Family Concert <i>Halloween Spooktacular</i>
October 31–November 2, 2019	Terrace Gallery	<i>Balancing Bodies</i>
November 2–3, 2019	REACH Studio F	<i>GET ‘M</i>
November 9–10, 2019	REACH Studio F	<i>EGG-tion Hero</i>
November 23–24, 2019	REACH Studio F	<i>Peter and Friends</i>
November 23, 2019	Opera House	<i>The Magic Flute: Family Look-In</i>
November 23, 2019–January 5, 2020	Family Theater	<i>Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive The Bus! (The Musical)</i>
January 11–12, 2020	Terrace Gallery	<i>Glimpse</i>
January 18–19, 2020	Family Theater	<i>Beauty and the Beat</i>
February 16, 2020	Concert Hall	NSO Family Concert <i>Girl Power!</i>
February 22–23, 2020	Family Theater	<i>Mozart Mash-up</i>
February 29–March 1, 2020	Family Theater	<i>Yao Yao</i>
March 7–8, 2020	Family Theater	<i>123 Andrés</i>
April 19, 2020	Concert Hall	NSO Family Concert <i>Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs</i>
April 24–26, 2020	Family Theater	<i>Pokon: An Unstoppable Game of Growth</i>
April 30–May 2, 2020	Family Theater	<i>The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus</i>
May 9–10, 2020	Family Theater	<i>Havana Hop</i>
May 9–24, 2020	REACH Studio K	<i>Dreamer: A South African Journey</i>
May 15–17, 2020	Family Theater	<i>New Visions/New Voices 2020</i>
TBA		<i>KC Chinese New Year Family Day</i>

Artists and performances are subject to change.

Kid Prince and Pablo

October 19–November 3, 2019 in the Family Theater

Based on Mark Twain’s *The Prince and the Pauper*, comes a new musical with a digital, Hip Hop infused twist. With music played live onstage through looping machines and drum pads, this retelling of the classic tale examines race, class, the wealth divide, and what it means to walk in someone else’s shoes. *Most enjoyed by ages nine and up.*

NSO Family Concert: *Halloween Spooktacular*

October 20, 2019 in the Concert Hall

An annual tradition! The Concert Hall becomes a ghostly venue when the NSO performs new and old classics to celebrate Halloween with ghoulishly attired NSO musicians. *Most enjoyed by ages five and up.*

Balancing Bodies

October 31–November 2, 2019 in the Terrace Gallery

In *Balancing Bodies*, Woest brings its performers and audience members to an unpredictable space. A theatrical universe full of surprises and unexpected twists in which performers invite the audience into an intimate and exploratory dialogue. The interaction between performer and audience member is central, a dynamic search in which the relationships between the two are spearheading and rewritten. *Balancing Bodies* plays with and undermines traditional (theater) codes. *Most enjoyed by ages nine and up.*

GET ‘M

November 2–3, 2019 in the REACH Studio F

Immerse yourself in the flashy world of *GET ‘EM*: a real chase with the latest design techniques, classic misunderstandings, and exciting behind-the-scenes adventures. Three apparently “mature” presenters are fighting for attention in a TV studio. They all want the microphone, which is enough reason for a race towards a surprising finish line. The imaginative scenic and media design offers many possibilities for hiding, diving, and a fantastic puppet show. It’s a performance in the spirit of Tom and Jerry or the Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote. Intended for the little ones and anyone who secretly still likes to play hide and seek. *Most enjoyed by ages three and up.*

EGG-tion Hero

November 9–10, 2019 in the REACH Studio F

Just imagine: an egg in a museum that no one is allowed to touch. A boring egg guarded by two ultra-boring attendants. And just when it gets so boring that you begin to fall asleep, you end up in a chase scene. A play for toddlers by two mime players. *Most enjoyed by ages three and up.*

Peter and Friends

November 23–24, 2019 in the REACH Studio F

Inspired by Sergei Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf*, this concert developed specifically for toddlers is sure to have audience members playing like ducks, catching a wicked wolf, and engaging with music all along the way. This wild adventure features actors, puppets, and a quintet of woodwind and brass musicians from the National Symphony Orchestra, presented in collaboration with Atlanta, Georgia’s TELLEER PRODUCTIONS. *Most enjoyed by infants to age five.*

The Magic Flute: Family Look-In

November 23, 2019 in the Opera House

In this introduction to opera designed for children and families, audience members experience excerpts from *The Magic Flute* along with insight into behind-the-scenes aspects such as lighting, scene changes, costuming, and more that go into creating stage magic. A whimsical production designed by children’s author/illustrator Maurice Sendak sets a playful landscape for this enchanting fairy tale. Join handsome prince Tamino and his silly sidekick Papageno as they set out on a fantastic journey to rescue the kidnapped Pamina in this special opera exploration. *Most enjoyed by ages five and up.*

Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive The Bus! (The Musical)

November 23, 2019–January 5, 2020 in the Family Theater

Whatever you do, don’t let The Pigeon star in his own musical production! Because it’s not easy being The Pigeon—you never get to do anything! But, when the Bus Driver has a crisis that threatens to make her passengers (gasp!) late, maybe that wily bird can do something. Starring an innovative mix of actors, puppets, songs, and feathers, *Don’t Let The Pigeon Drive The Bus! (The Musical)* is sure to get everyone’s wings flapping. With a script written by Mo Willems, the creator of the Number One *New York Times* best-selling, Caldecott Honor-winning Pigeon picture books, along with longtime collaborator and Disney Jr’s Muppet Babies executive producer, Mr. Warburton, and featuring music by Deborah Wicks La Puma, the composer behind *Elephant & Piggie’s We Are In A Play!* and *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience*, this comedic musical production is even more fun than staying up late and having a hot dog party! *Most enjoyed by ages five and up.*

Glimpse

January 11–12, 2020 in the Terrace Gallery

What do colors sound like? Who can understand the moon? What is the sun saying? What sounds lower—a double bass or a drum? How do you play a flash? How do you sing a tree? How many colors does a dream have? *Glimpse* transports you to an enchanted dream world, in which sounds and images play an exciting game with one another and with you. It is a music performance for toddlers and their (grand)parents, in which musicians, music, images, technology, and audiences embark on a special friendship. Masterfully played, the performance maintains an exemplary balance between the music, its graphic elements, and the interaction with the children. Their primary role as excellent jazz musicians is never overshadowed by the visuals, rather, it gives the audience a new way to relate and explore a world of music and sounds. *Most enjoyed by ages two to four.*

Beauty and the Beat

January 18–19, 2020 in the Family Theater

NSO principal second violinist Marissa Regni and NSO principal percussionist Eric Shin perform an exciting new program exploring the magic created when the violin and percussion join together. Eric may have a vast array of percussion instruments, but Marissa shows how versatile the violin can be. This melodic and rhythmic ride for families proves that no matter how different the instruments are, they can come together to make some beautiful music. *Most enjoyed by ages three and up.*

NSO Family Concert: Girl Power!

February 16, 2020 in the Concert Hall

A special showcase of female composers, conductors, and performers marks 100 years since the 19th Amendment gave many women the right to vote. *Most enjoyed by ages five and up.*

Mozart Mash-up

February 22–23, 2020 in the Family Theater

A string quartet featuring members of the National Symphony Orchestra plays its favorites from the prolific composer. At age three, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart could be found observing his big sister Nannerl at the keyboard. By four or five, he had written his first compositions, and by age seven his first symphony. Mozart continues to inspire audiences and performers today—some of whom experienced his music when they were just as young as the composer! *Most enjoyed by ages seven and up.*

Yao Yao

February 29–March 1, 2020 in the Family Theater

Yao is a mischievous little girl who loves playing with her dad. But every morning Daddy has to dress up in his suit, pick up his briefcase, and go to work. One day, Yao, unhappy with her father's departure, grabs his overcoat and accidentally pulls a thread that leads to the start of a magical world of adventure and discovery. Join Yao on her ingenious journey to find out what's waiting for her at the end of the thread... *Yao Yao* is a playful blend of reality and imagination, using interactive screen art technology and live music. *Most enjoyed by ages three to seven.*

1 2 3 Andrés

March 7–8, 2020 in the Family Theater

Andrés and Christina are Latin Grammy Award®-winning teaching artists who get kids and families excited about learning and moving together in Spanish and English. Join Andrés on an exciting cultural exploration of Latin America through an introduction of language, music, and dance. Families sing, shake, and sound out rhythms. Children can use their imaginations to ride an imaginary airplane and join in singing and dancing while practicing new vocabulary. *Most enjoyed by ages three to six.*

NSO Family Concert: Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs (a Symphonic Spectacular)

April 19, 2020 in the Concert Hall

Once upon a time, there were three hungry Dinosaurs: Papa Dinosaur, Mama Dinosaur...and a Dinosaur who happened to be visiting from Norway! That's just the beginning of this hilarious, fractured, symphonic take on *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, as retold by Mo Willems. This new classic is presented by favorite performers and the National Symphony Orchestra, featuring original music composed by indie pop icon and NSO Artistic Advisor Ben Folds. *Most enjoyed by ages five and up.*

Pokon: An Unstoppable Game of Growth

April 24–26, 2020 in the Family Theater

Like children raging over the playground, the three performers storm the stage. What follows is a whirling, twirling, hiccupping, tumbling, rumbling, and singing stream of playful necessity. Even though we are sometimes a little stuck—in a table, a ladder, or those persistent rules—Pokon is unstoppable. *Most enjoyed by ages five and up.*

The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus

April 30–May 20, 2020 in the Family Theater

Sheila is the eight-year-old white-hot sun around which her friends orbit. This story, written by Eric Coble, is about children left alone in summer with epic imaginations, and what happens when they meet wild animals intent on bringing that wild back to civilization. One night, as the children hide in their fortress of junk, a pick-up truck rumbles down the dirt road driven by a real-life coyote who walks on his hind legs and wears a denim jacket and sunglasses. Sheila steps up to meet him and suddenly the whole crew is in the truck hurtling toward.... where? Directed by Julia

Flood, this universe spirals, leading our intrepid band to meet The Council of Howls, the Sting Brigade, the Challenge of The Cactus Flower, and much more. *Most enjoyed by ages seven and up.*

Havana Hop

May 9–10, 2020 in the Family Theater

Young Yeila dreams of being a superstar, but her lack of confidence gives her awful stage fright. With advice from her mother and mentors, Yeila begins her journey to find her roots, get confidence and be amazing! Travel with Yelia who visits her grandmother in Cuba to add a salsa flavor to her own Hip Hop style! The audience gets to dance along in this dynamic participation play where one actress creates three generations of lively women. Journey with Yelia as she discovers the fun of her multi-cultural heritage. *Most enjoyed by ages two to ten.*

Dreamer: A South African Journey

May 9–24, 2020 in the REACH Studio K

Join a journey inspired by the real life and music of singer and songwriter Tuelo Minah. Aene is a young girl living in South Africa who sets out to the United States to chase her dreams. Yet as Aene encounters a country that is hostile towards immigrants, she finds her dreams might come at a greater cost. Director and playwright Zoey Martinson captures Tuelo's journey from girl to woman, from apartheid South Africa to America, with music by Tuelo Minah herself and arranged with Mandisi Dyantyis. Told through immersive projections and inventive staging, this poetic musical reminds us we have the power to define our own destiny. *Most enjoyed by ages nine and up.*

New Visions/New Voices 2020

May 15–17, 2020 in the Family Theater

The Kennedy Center's *New Visions/New Voices* is a week-long program for playwrights and theaters to stimulate and support the creation of new work for young audiences and families. Participants write, revise, and rehearse new plays and musicals which are then presented as rehearsed readings with post-show discussions during a national weekend conference for theater professionals, educators, publishers, and others interested in the field from around the country and internationally.

KC Chinese New Year Family Day

Date to be announced

The Kennedy Center celebrates the Year of the Rat in 2020! For these annual festivities, you're invited to celebrate Lunar New Year with a special Family Day. Visitors are welcome to enjoy numerous events, including many free activities and performances highlighting Chinese culture for kids of all ages. More information will be available in the coming months at Kennedy-Center.org.

Ticket Information

Patrons wishing to renew or purchase new subscriptions may do so by calling the Subscription office at (202) 416-8500 or go to www.kennedy-center.org/subscriptions. Pricing and on sale details for single tickets will be made available at a later date.

Explore the Arts educational events including Theater Look-Ins will continue to be held in conjunction with many theater productions as part of the Kennedy Center's ongoing education program.

Funding Credits

Bank of America is the Presenting Sponsor of Performances for Young Audiences.

Additional support for Performances for Young Audiences, NSO Family Concerts, and New Visions/New Voices 2020 is provided by **A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation; The Kimsey Endowment; The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; Paul M. Angell Family Foundation; Anne and Chris Reyes; an endowment from the Ryna and Melvin Cohen Family Foundation; the National Committee for the Performing Arts; the U.S. Department of Education; and the Volunteer Council for the NSO.**

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