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**MARTHA ARGERICH, EAGLES,
AL PACINO, MAVIS STAPLES, AND JAMES TAYLOR**

TO RECEIVE 39TH ANNUAL KENNEDY CENTER HONORS

**America to Celebrate Honorees' Lifetime Artistic Achievements
Sunday, December 4, 2016**

Gala will be broadcast on CBS on December 27, 9:00 p.m. ET

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today announced the selection of five Honorees who will receive the 2016 Kennedy Center Honors. Recipients to be honored at the 39th annual national celebration of the arts are: Argentine pianist **Martha Argerich**, rock band the **Eagles**, screen and stage actor **Al Pacino**, gospel and blues singer **Mavis Staples**, and musician **James Taylor**.

“The Kennedy Center Honors celebrates the spectacular talents of artists whose brilliance has left a lasting impact on our society,” stated Kennedy Center Chairman David M. Rubenstein. “These Honorees represent what is possible when creativity is not just cultivated, but unleashed. Martha Argerich’s distinguished performances have spanned the globe and over the last six decades have earned her world recognition as one of the greatest pianists of the 20th and 21st centuries; the Eagles’s ambitiously themed albums epically merged the American West and rock n’ roll, paving the way for unconventional music makers and artists to come; Al Pacino has embodied some of the most powerful characters of our time on both the stage and silver screen; Mavis Staples’s unmatched gospel and rhythm and blues masterpieces span 60 years and even served as a musical backdrop to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s campaign for Civil Rights; and James Taylor’s warm baritone and poetic lyrics embody the art of songwriting, making him one of the defining musical figures of our time and his music the soundtrack of our country.”

“Reflecting on the powerful commitments these artists have made to their crafts as well as the cultural contributions they have made over the course of their illustrious careers is a humbling experience,” commented Kennedy Center President Deborah F. Rutter. “These Honorees have each played a unique role in shaping America’s artistic landscape with their work, expressing their creativity in ways that pushed the boundaries of what art can do, and what it can mean. Their artistic triumphs have motivated us, moved us, and will continue to inspire us for generations to come.”

The annual Honors Gala has become the highlight of the Washington cultural and society calendar, and its broadcast on CBS is a high point of the television season. On Sunday, December 4, in a star-studded celebration on the Kennedy Center Opera House stage, produced by Ricky Kirshner and Glenn Weiss of White Cherry Entertainment, the 2016 Honorees will be saluted by today’s leading performers from New York, Hollywood, and the arts capitals of the world. Seated with the President of the United States and Mrs. Obama, the Honorees will accept the recognition and gratitude of their peers through performances and tributes.

The President and Mrs. Obama will receive the Honorees along with the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees at the White House prior to the gala performance. The 2016 Kennedy Center Honors Gala concludes with a dinner in the Grand Foyer. The Honorary Chairs of the 2016 Honors Gala are Buffy Cafritz and Ann D. Jordan.

The Kennedy Center Honors medallions will be presented on Saturday, December 3, the night before the Gala, at a State Department dinner hosted by Secretary of State John Kerry.

The Honors Gala will be recorded for broadcast on the CBS Network for the 39th consecutive year as a two-hour primetime special on December 27 at 9:00 p.m. ET. CBS is the Exclusive Sponsor of the Kennedy Center Honors.

White Cherry Entertainment is well-known for producing the perennial award-winning Tony Awards[®] for the last 14 consecutive years, and also for producing the Emmy Awards[®], NFL Opening Kickoff and Super Bowl Halftime Shows, the Democratic National Convention, Presidential Inaugural Galas, and many others. To date, White Cherry Entertainment has won eight Emmy Awards[®], while Kirshner and Weiss have individually received an additional four Emmy Awards[®], six Directors Guild Awards, a Peabody Award, and more than 30 Emmy[®] nominations. This is the second consecutive year White Cherry will produce the Kennedy Center Honors.

For the second year, the Kennedy Center will launch a contest on social media (#SendMeToHonors) in which one winner will receive two tickets to attend the 2016 Honors Gala on December 4. Additional details will be announced at a later date.

The Kennedy Center Honors Founding Producer is George Stevens, Jr.

Boeing is the Exclusive Underwriter of the 2016 Kennedy Center Honors Gala.

Delta Air Lines is the Official Airline of the Kennedy Center Honors.

The Honors recipients recognized for their lifetime contributions to American culture through the performing arts—whether in music, dance, theater, opera, motion pictures, or television—are confirmed by the Executive Committee of the Center's Board of Trustees. The primary criterion in the selection process is excellence. The Honors are not designated by art form or category of artistic achievement; the selection process, over the years, has produced balance among the various arts and artistic disciplines.

The Honoree selection process includes solicitation of recommendations from the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees, the artistic community, and the general public. This year's selected Honorees were chosen based on the recommendation of the Center's Special Honors Advisory Committee, which is chaired by trustees Cappy McGarr and Elaine Wynn along with past Honors recipients and distinguished artists Julie Andrews, Herbie Hancock, Yo-Yo Ma, and Chita Rivera as well as Harolyn Blackwell and Damian Woetzel. These individuals play a critical role in the evaluation and selection process and the Kennedy Center is indebted to them for their involvement.

ABOUT THE HONOREES

Martha Argerich (pianist)

Martha Argerich was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Considered a child prodigy, she began her first piano lessons at the age of five with Vincenzo Scaramuzza. In 1955, she moved to Europe and continued her studies in London, Vienna, and Switzerland. In 1957, she won the Bolzano and Geneva Piano Competitions, and in 1965 the Warsaw International Chopin Competition. She made her first commercial recording in 1960 followed by her U.S. debut in 1965 in the Lincoln Center's Great Performers series. Since then, she has been considered one of the most prominent pianists in the world both in popularity and ability.

She rose to fame with her interpretations of virtuoso piano literature of the 19th and 20th centuries. Her large repertoire includes Bach, Bartók, Beethoven, and Messiaen, as well as Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Debussy, Ravel, Franck, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Shostakovich, and Tchaikovsky. Though she is permanently invited by the most prestigious orchestras, conductors, and music festivals in Europe, Japan, and America, chamber music currently represents a significant part of her musical life. Her collaborations with other artists are legendary as is her support for young artists. She has organized international competitions where she also sometimes serves as juror, hosts an annual festival, performs special concerts, and teaches master classes herself along with her frequent collaborators.

She has recorded for EMI, Sony, Philips, Teldec, and DGG, and performed for worldwide broadcasts, receiving numerous international distinctions. Among her numerous accolades, she been the recipient of three Grammy Awards®, continuing to elevate the classical music genre in quality and appeal to a global audience.

Eagles (rock band: the late Glenn Frey, Don Henley, Timothy B. Schmit, and Joe Walsh)

The Eagles are one of the most influential and commercially successful American rock bands of all time. With their profound lyrics, harmonies, and country-tinged melodies, they created a signature Southern California sound. The Eagles have sold more than 120 million albums worldwide, have scored six number one albums, and have topped the singles charts five times.

Glenn Frey was born in Detroit, Michigan. Growing up, he studied piano and played in local bands. After moving to Los Angeles, he met Don Henley. After touring together as members of Linda Ronstadt's backing band, they began writing songs that would appear on their debut album, *Eagles*. Frey and Henley co-wrote most of the band's best-known songs. Glenn Frey succumbed to complications from Rheumatoid Arthritis, Acute Ulcerative Colitis, and Pneumonia and died on January 18, 2016. Don Henley was born in Cass County, Texas in 1947 and co-founded the group with Frey. Joe Walsh was born in Wichita, Kansas in 1947. He was already a well-known solo artist when he joined the Eagles in 1975. Walsh's creative contribution to music has received praise from many of the best rock guitarists. Timothy B. Schmit was born in Oakland, California in 1947. He joined the Eagles in 1977. Although the Eagles are thought of as a quintessential California band, Schmit is the only member of the group to actually be a native of California.

Although the band was initially only together from 1971–1980, they were enormously popular. As a result of overwhelming public demand for their music and its messages, they reunited in 1994 for an MTV concert special. A live recording of the concert, *Hell Freezes Over*, sold millions of copies, and launched a tour that ended up running through August 1996. The group released a long-awaited studio album, *Long Road Out of Eden*, in 2007 to critical acclaim.

Al Pacino (actor)

Actor and director Al Pacino is a unique and enduring figure in the world of American stage and film. Born in East Harlem, he grew up in New York City's South Bronx and studied performing arts until the age of 17 when he moved on to study acting.

He began to draw notice on the stage, honing his craft while working in numerous theatrical productions, including off-Broadway performances that led to multiple off-Broadway Obie Awards and his first Tony Award[®] by 1969. Pacino continued appearing onstage in the 1970s, picking up another Tony Award[®] while landing his first leading part in a feature film in 1971. It was the following year that Francis Ford Coppola selected him to take on the breakthrough role of Michael Corleone in *The Godfather*. He was nominated for an Academy Award[®] for his work on *The Godfather* and within the next six years he received another four Academy Award[®] nominations for the films *Serpico*, *The Godfather Part II*, *Dog Day Afternoon*, and *...And Justice For All*.

A long and rich film career has followed with more than 45 titles including *Scarface*, *Sea of Love*, *The Insider*, *Donnie Brasco*, *Heat* (where he shared the screen for the first time with fellow film icon Robert DeNiro), and *Any Given Sunday*. He garnered two additional Academy Award[®] nominations and in 1992 won the Academy Award[®] for Best Actor in *Scent of a Woman*. He played Shylock in Michael Radford's film adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*, meanwhile receiving another Tony Award[®] nomination for Best Leading Actor for playing the same role on stage. His credits also include directing and starring in multiple works, while also dominating on the small screen in a variety of unforgettable HBO and other television roles. He garnered Golden Globe[®] and Emmy[®] nominations for his performances, as well as the Golden Globe[®] Cecil B. DeMille Award for Lifetime Achievement in Motion Pictures, the American Film Institute Life Achievement Award, and in 2011 the National Merit of Arts from President Obama.

Mavis Staples (gospel and rhythm and blues artist)

This iconic singer is an alchemist of American music, having continuously crossed genre lines like no musician since Ray Charles. Over the course of her 60-year career as a musical pioneer, she has intrepidly blurred the lines between gospel, soul, folk, pop, R&B, blues, rock, Americana, and Hip Hop.

Now in her seventh decade, with the release of her new album *Livin' on a High Note*, she is only gaining momentum. She continues to tour incessantly, remaining vital, engaged, and continually evolving her sound to reflect the times she traverses and influences with her music.

Since her first recording at age 13 in 1954, Mavis Staples has learned from, worked with, and schooled countless legends, and has brought her own timeless talent to every performance. From the Delta-inflected gospel sound she helped create in the 1950s with her father Pops and her brother and sisters as The Staple Singers, to the freedom songs of the Civil Rights era, to pop radio stardom during the Stax era with hits "I'll Take You There" and "Respect Yourself," to *The Last Waltz*, to serving as muse to both Bob Dylan and Prince at the peak of their careers, to 21st-century collaborations with Van Morrison, Billy Preston, Zac Brown, Ry Cooder, Bruce Hornsby, Chuck D., and Willie Nelson, to her Grammy Award[®]—winning partnership with fellow Chicagoan Jeff Tweedy, to her HBO documentary *Mavis!*, the one constant has been Mavis and her singular voice. She has embraced her evolution, absorbing new sounds and ideas, rising to meet the challenges of longevity, and bringing her message of hope and positivity to new listeners—song after song, show after show.

James Taylor (singer, songwriter)

As a recording and touring artist, James Taylor has touched people with his warm baritone voice and distinctive style of guitar-playing for more than 40 years, while setting a precedent to which countless young musicians have aspired. Over the course of his celebrated songwriting and performing career, Taylor has sold more than 100 million albums, earning gold, platinum, and multi-platinum awards for classics ranging from *Sweet Baby James* in 1970 to *October Road* in 2002. In 2015, Taylor released *Before This World*, his first new studio album in 13 years, which earned him his first ever #1 album on the Billboard Charts and a Grammy® nomination for Best Pop Vocal Album. He has won multiple Grammy Awards® and has been inducted into both the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the prestigious Songwriters Hall of Fame. In 2012, Taylor was awarded the distinguished Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French government and the National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama in a White House ceremony. In November of 2015, Taylor was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation’s highest civilian honor.

Taylor is currently in the middle of a five-month tour across more than 50 cities in North America, which includes sold-out performances at Tanglewood, Wrigley Field, and Fenway Park.

**Statements and photos of the 2016 Kennedy Center Honorees
are available to media upon request.**

For more information about the Kennedy Center, please visit our [website](#).

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