

FOR RELEASE:

August 25, 2022

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Presents a New Installment of

Sound Health

The year-round initiative brings together, scientists, music therapists, artists, and the public to explore the intersection of music and wellness



featuring

Renée Fleming
esperanza spalding

Two-day interdisciplinary symposium illustrates the power of music to guide us toward collective healing through performances, panel discussions, workshops, and screenings about mental wellness and joy

Events will also feature Children’s Chorus of Washington, Dr. Francis Collins, Dessa, Quetzal Flores, Howard University’s Afro Blue, Michela’s Love Movement, Radiolab’s Molly Webster, Eric Whitacre, the World Health Organization’s Christopher Bailey, and more

October 2–3, 2022

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in partnership with the National Institute of Health (NIH), the Sound Health Network (SHN) operated by University of

California San Francisco (UCSF) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), soprano Renée Fleming, and Dr. Francis Collins, science advisor to the President and the longest-serving director of the NIH will host a two-day Sound Health summit designed to illustrate the importance of music to mental health and well-being.

“Public fascination with the power of music on our minds and bodies continues to grow, along with the science supporting it,” said **Renée Fleming**, Kennedy Center Artistic Advisor-at-Large and renowned soprano. “Challenges like the climate crisis, gun violence, the fraying of our social fabric, and the ongoing pandemic are taking a huge toll on our collective mental health. So exploring the enormous potential of the arts for human connection and well-being is more crucial than ever.”

The concert on **Sunday, October 2, 2022** provides an intimate and personal window into the pandemic journeys of world-class musicians and artists, in performance and conversation with therapists, researchers, and scientists. The line-up includes Children’s Chorus of Washington, Dr. Francis Collins, Dessa, Renée Fleming, Quetzal Flores, Howard University’s Afro Blue, Dr. Jacquelyn Kulinski, Dr. Charles Limb, Michela Marino Lerman, Maria Rivera, Caesar Sant, Dr. Indre Viskontas, and Eric Whitacre. The concert will culminate in an interactive experience—led by **esperanza spalding** in collaborative design with Dr. Helena Hansen and Dr. Marisol Norris—as a preview to Monday’s workshops exploring the cultural context and practice of communal improvised music-making. The evening will explore the science behind recovery and the collective journey from pandemic isolation and loneliness, to the rediscovery of resilience through community.

Sound Health: Renew/Remix continues on **Monday, October 3, 2022**. Free activations and performances will highlight the impact of music as a gateway to restoration and the research that plays a fundamental role. Taking place at multiple locations across the Kennedy Center’s REACH campus, the activities will build off themes of resilience and wellness. Public workshops and panel discussions will feature topics including policy, mental health, songwriting, access and equity, communal singing, and practical takeaways for implementing music’s therapeutic capacity. The day will also include a special premiere screening of *MUSIC VETS*, a film about the healing power of music featuring the stories of military veterans struggling with PTSD, directed by Jon Kaufman and El Sawyer. The film will be followed by a Q&A discussion.

Tickets for Sunday’s Concert Hall performance are available for purchase on the Kennedy Center [website](#). Ticketing for Monday’s programs are free and can be reserved online starting Monday, September 5, 2022. Visit [kennedy-center.org](https://www.kennedy-center.org) for more information.

Schedule for Monday, October 3, 2022

Please visit the Kennedy Center [website](#) for further programming information

Time	Venue	Title	Description
10:00 a.m.	Skylight Pavilion	<p>Opening Session</p> <p>The Call: How Music Saved Me</p>	<p>The day's opening session will include moving personal stories about strength, resilience, and courage that comes from the power of music. The session also serves to remind us of the explosive benefits in raising awareness and increasing access to music as a tool for promoting health, wellness, and recovery.</p> <p>An excerpt from <i>The Vanishing Point</i> which tells the story of Christopher Bailey's journey into blindness, and what he learned about perception, empathy, and the healing power of the arts.</p> <p>The opening session will also include a panel discussion that answers the call to provide access and increase public awareness of music as a tool for promoting health, wellness, and recovery. The panel responds with a global perspective, big picture ideas, and an eye towards long-term change.</p>
10:00 a.m.	PT-109	<p>Co-Lab (led by esperanza spalding)</p> <p>*Closed student session</p>	<p>A practice-based, collaborative experience for scientists, musicians, and field practitioners to explore communal improvised musical creation. Led by Grammy Award®-winning composer, vocalist, and bassist esperanza spalding, designed with partners Dr. Helena Hansen and Dr. Marisol Norris.</p>
12:00 p.m.	Studio K	<p>When We Sing: Eric Whitacre & Afro Blue</p>	<p>Grammy Award®-winning classical composer Eric Whitacre and Howard University's jazz vocal group, Afro Blue, will dive into an active exploration of the human voice, the power of communal singing, and the experience of shared sound. The performance will include a conversation with scientists Jacquelyn Kulinski and Psyche Loui, alongside Afro Blue founder and director Connaitre Miller, to expand upon the scientific reasoning behind these powerful phenomena. Audience members will be invited to participate, illustrating the universal power of engaging with song and sound.</p>

2:00 p.m.	Studio K	Communal Songwriting	Grammy [®] -winning artist and grassroots organizer Quetzal Flores leads a communal songwriting workshop, creating space to engage in critical and creative conversation. The workshop will include a panel discussion and Q&A with Flores and participating musicians and practitioners.
3:00 p.m.	Skylight Pavilion	Music-based Health Interventions: The Path Ahead	An NIH-curated panel will explore current evidence and research gaps in the field of music-based interventions, considerations and efforts directed at filling those research gaps, and how this work can inform future reimbursement for care considerations.
3:00 p.m.	PT-109	Co-Lab (led by esperanza spalding)	A practice-based, collaborative experience for scientists, musicians, and field practitioners to explore communal improvised musical creation. Led by Grammy Award [®] -winning composer, vocalist, and bassist esperanza spalding, designed with partners Dr. Helena Hansen and Dr. Marisol Norris.
4:30 p.m.	Skylight Pavilion	Youth Mental Health and Music	Following the Surgeon General advisory on the youth mental health crisis—further exposed by COVID-19 pandemic—field experts will explore the transformative effect of music engagement on today’s young people, providing practical takeaways for students, parents, and educators.
6 p.m.	Justice Forum	MUSIC VETS	<p><i>MUSIC VETS</i> tells the story of three proud U.S. Military Veterans in different stages of recovery from PTSD and/or traumatic brain injuries. Set in the coastal military communities of Southern California and the hustle and bustle of New York City, Lito, Ben, and Deborah demonstrate the therapeutic power of music to cope and recover in practice—unlocking emotions and finding new ways forward, offering us a glimpse of humanity’s resiliency in the face of adversity.</p> <p><i>Screening will be followed by a Q&A discussion featuring film directors Jon Kaufman and El Sawyer, and an expanded conversation on the role music can play to advance health and wellbeing of veterans.</i></p>

ABOUT THE KENNEDY CENTER

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is America’s living memorial to President John F. Kennedy, attracting millions of visitors each year to more than 2,000 performances, events, and exhibits. With its artistic affiliates, the National Symphony Orchestra and Washington National Opera, the Center is one of the nation’s busiest performing arts centers dedicated to providing world-class art, powerful education, and outstanding memorial

experiences to the broadest possible constituency. Across all its offerings, the Kennedy Center is committed to increasing accessible, inclusive opportunities for all people to participate in, and learn through the arts, including more than 400 free performances each year and a variety of [Specially Priced Ticket](#) programs for students, seniors, persons with disabilities, and others. On September 7, 2019, the Kennedy Center inaugurated the REACH, its first-ever major expansion. Designed by Steven Holl Associates, the REACH provides visitors with new opportunities to interact and engage with the Center as the nation's premier nexus of arts, learning, and culture. To learn more about the Kennedy Center, please visit www.kennedy-center.org.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH)

NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

ABOUT THE SOUND HEALTH NETWORK

The Sound Health Network (SNH) is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts with the University of California, San Francisco in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and Renée Fleming, the center's artistic advisor. The SHN was established to promote research and public awareness about the impact of music on health and wellness. Learn more at soundhealth.ucsf.edu.

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For more information, please visit the Sound Health [website](#).



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