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

2023–2024 Jazz Season

Jason Moran, Artistic Director

Celebrating Duke Ellington 125

**Cyrus Chestnut: Duke Ellington’s *Sacred Concert*; Jason Moran – Solo Ellington;
Duke Ellington Orchestra; Tomeka Reid, *Celebrating Ellington*;
Three Keys to Ellington: Justin Kauflin, José André Montaña, Matthew Whitaker**

Exciting Voices and New Visions

***A Jazz New Year’s Eve* with Jazzmeia Horn and Her Noble Force;
Allison Miller and Myra Melford’s Lux Quartet;
Linda May Han Oh, *The Glass Hours*; Clarence Penn, *Penn Station*;
Joshua Redman, *where are we***

plus

**Jason Moran and Alicia Hall Moran, *Family Ball*; Charles Tolliver, *Africa/Brass*;
Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival 2024 hosted by Dee Dee Bridgewater;
and more**

(WASHINGTON)—Throughout the 2023–2024 season, the 13th presented under Artistic Director for Jazz, **Jason Moran**, the Kennedy Center commemorates Duke Ellington’s 125th birthday with institution-wide celebrations of the American icon who changed how the world heard music. The Jazz season explores the Washington, D.C. native’s wide-ranging genius through extraordinary performances, masterful tributes, and new works that carry Ellington’s legacy into the future.

“Duke Ellington’s music represents so much more than the notes that he played. He represents a culture; he represents Washington, D.C.; he represents innovation and collectivity among artists. He represents humanity,” said Jason Moran. “This season, we are continuing his story and honoring that immense heritage.”

Duke Ellington 125 will be celebrated in all corners of the Kennedy Center with programs presented across jazz, dance, education, the National Symphony Orchestra, the office of VSA and Accessibility, and Social Impact. Jazz at the Kennedy Center’s commemoration launches on March 15, 2024 with Ellington’s very own Grammy Award®–winning supergroup, **The Duke Ellington Orchestra**. Jason Moran takes on Ellington’s “Grand Canon,” as he called it, in **Jason Moran – Solo Ellington** (April 10, 2024). Ellington’s spirit of innovation lives on as 2022 MacArthur “Genius Grant” Fellow and cellist extraordinaire, **Tomeka Reid**, presents her Ellington-inspired new work co-commissioned by the Kennedy Center (April 24, 2024). Then, three recipients of the Kennedy Center’s VSA International Young Musicians Award—awarded annually to outstanding young musicians with disabilities—come together in *Three Keys to Ellington* (April 26, 2024): Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition semifinalist and *Betty Carter’s Jazz Ahead* graduate **Justin Kauflin**, Kennedy Center “Next 50” leader **José André Montaña**, and *Betty Carter’s Jazz Ahead* graduate **Matthew Whitaker**. The festivities come to a head when acclaimed pianist **Cyrus Chestnut** brings Duke Ellington’s ***Sacred Concert*** to the Kennedy Center Concert Hall (April 29, 2024).

As Ellington created new vistas in music, artists who are crafting new journeys in jazz abound all season. **Joshua Redman**, widely regarded as the greatest saxophonist of his generation comes together with vocalist **Gabrielle Cavassa** for ***where are we*** (October 3, 2023), based on his Blue Note Records debut album. Celebrated mezzo-soprano and composer **Alicia Hall Moran** and husband **Jason Moran** explore their life together by examining each other’s repertoire in a new creative love note, ***Family Ball*** (June 7, 2024).

The Club at Studio K continues to be one of D.C.’s best destinations to witness artists at the top of their craft in an intimate setting. Jazz at the club kicks off in February with Grammy Award®–winning bassist and composer **Linda May Han Oh**’s newest project, ***The Glass Hours*** (February 17, 2024), a collection of works based on the fragility of time and life. Pianist **Myra Melford** and drummer **Allison Miller** draw on their shared passion for nature and life-giving light with their **Lux Quartet** (February 22, 2024). In March, drummer and composer **Clarence Penn** hits the stage with ***Penn Station*** (March 16, 2024). *Additional Club at Studio K performances to be announced.*

Another genius’ work comes into focus when legendary trumpeter **Charles Tolliver** reimagines **John Coltrane’s *Africa/Brass*** (October 21, 2023) in an exclusive concert in the Terrace Theater featuring saxophonist **Camille Thurman** and Howard University’s **Afro Blue** vocal ensemble.

Beloved annual Kennedy Center traditions return with exciting artists. For the holidays, **NPR's A Jazz Piano Christmas** (December 2, 2023) shines a spotlight on the electrifying pianist, vocalist, and actress **Melvis Santa**, and audiences can swing in the New Year with vocal powerhouse **Jazzmeia Horn** (December 31, 2023) and her sensational band, Her Noble Force. In May, the incomparable **Dee Dee Bridgewater** returns to host the 27th Annual **Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival** (May 10 & 11, 2024). Over two days, the festival will feature bass virtuoso **Endea Owens**; Grammy Award®-winning Brazilian pianist and singer **Eliane Elias**; award-winning trumpeter, composer, and Dean of Manhattan School of Music's jazz division **Ingrid Jensen**; and **Julia Keefe's Indigenous Big Band**, a groundbreaking 16-piece ensemble of all-star American Indigenous musicians.

Audiences are invited to experience the future of jazz with three free performances on the Millennium Stage featuring participants in **Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead** (June 5–7, 2024), the international two-week jazz residency performance and composition project under the direction of Jason Moran, which discovers and presents the next generation of jazz greats.

THE 2023–2024 KENNEDY CENTER JAZZ SEASON

Joshua Redman Group featuring Gabrielle Cavassa: *where are we*

October 3, 2023 at 7 & 9 p.m., Terrace Theater

Joshua Redman, widely revered as the greatest jazz saxophonist of his generation, joins forces with mesmerizing vocalist Gabrielle Cavassa on his celebrated Blue Note Records debut *where are we*. Redman calls *where are we* “a meditation on America and the power and importance of place.” The artists take on music from Rodgers & Hart to Springsteen, all interpreted with the improvisational brilliance and melodic invention that is a hallmark of Redman's artistry—and of this all-star ensemble featuring Aaron Parks (piano), Joe Sanders (bass), and Brian Blade (drums).

Charles Tolliver Presents *Africa/Brass*

Featuring Camille Thurman & Howard University's Afro Blue

October 21, 2023 at 7 & 9 p.m., Terrace Theater

A live performance of John Coltrane's *Africa/Brass* is rarer than a total eclipse, but D.C. audiences have a chance to experience the mind-blowing album with legendary trumpeter Charles Tolliver as their adventurous, avant-garde guide. At this exclusive concert, Tolliver—who created the original transcriptions of the historic 1961 work—reimagines Coltrane's music with internationally acclaimed saxophonist Camille Thurman and Howard University's dynamic vocal jazz ensemble, Afro Blue. Join us for this tribute to an album embodying the cosmic unity of mankind and music, and the deep African roots of both.

NPR's A Jazz Piano Christmas

Featuring Melvis Santa

December 2, 2023 at 7 & 9 p.m., Terrace Theater

Holiday classics as never heard before! The Kennedy Center and NPR present *A Jazz Piano Christmas*, the annual sell-out event featuring today's best jazz pianists performing the most loved seasonal music. This year, we spotlight pianist, vocalist, and actress Melvis Santa—whose eclectic Afro-Cuban style has made her one of the most electrifying artists on the scene. *Additional artists to be announced.*

A Jazz New Year's Eve: Jazzmeia Horn and Her Noble Force

December 31, 2023 at 7 & 9 p.m., Terrace Theater

Swing in the New Year with Jazzmeia Horn and her sensational band. With a name that speaks for itself, the mesmerizing vocalist transports audiences to a bygone era of elegance and improvisation. Get ready for a night of fiery new music and the timeless allure of big band jazz.

Garnering praise from critics and fans alike, Jazzmeia Horn's first big band project *Dear Love* is nominated for the Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album Grammy Award®. Horn is a graduate of the Kennedy Center's *Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead* program and is the illustrious winner of the 2013 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, the 2015 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocal Competition, and countless other awards and accolades.

Linda May Han Oh, The Glass Hours

February 17, 2024 at 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., Club at Studio K

Grammy Award®-winning bassist and composer Linda May Han Oh leads a dynamic group of musicians in her newest project *The Glass Hours*, a collection of works based on abstract themes of the fragility of time and life. Impeccably layered with boundless energy, *The Glass Hours* is a striking work exploring paradoxes seeded within our individual and societal values. *NPR* says, "Beyond her authority and dynamic presence as a bassist, Oh has become a first-rate bandleader and composer." A supreme supporter of the jazz community, she's collaborated with artists like Pat Metheny, Vijay Iyer, Dave Douglas, the late Geri Allen, and Terri Lyne Carrington.

Allison Miller and Myra Melford's Lux Quartet

February 22, 2024 at 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., Club at Studio K

Celebrating the life-giving power of light, the Lux Quartet is an exploratory new ensemble co-led by two of the most celebrated and visionary artists in modern improvised music: pianist Myra Melford and drummer Allison Miller. Drawing on a shared passion for the preservation of nature and a boundary stretching approach to music, the two innovative composers and bandleaders are joined by saxophonist Dayna Stephens and bassist Scott Colley, together crafting a sonic environment that glows with its own intense yet nurturing radiance.

Duke Ellington Orchestra

March 15, 2024 at 7 & 9 p.m., Terrace Theater

They've been called everything from "The Washingtonians" to "Duke Ellington and His Kentucky Club Orchestra" to "Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra." But under any name, the Duke Ellington Orchestra maintains an unparalleled place in music history. Performing worldwide for more than 101 years under the guidance of three generations of Ellington's family, the Grammy Award®-winning supergroup has put out more iconic jazz classics than any other band—passing the sound artist-to-artist in the creative spirit of its founder.

Clarence Penn, *Penn Station*

March 14, 2024 at 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., Club at Studio K

Clarence Penn is one of the busiest jazz drummers in the world. His band Penn Station is known for their ability to find new accents in well-known songs. He's a leader of multiple bands, prolific composer, celebrated producer, and renowned educator. Penn Station moves seamlessly through styles because Clarence is devoted to the drum rhythms of the world. His motto: "When people hear my name, I want them to think, 'I don't know what band he's playing with tonight, or what he'll be doing, but it's going to be good.'"

Jason Moran – *Solo Ellington*

April 10, 2024 at 8 p.m., Eisenhower Theater

Guided by Duke Ellington's great canon, Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz Jason Moran takes a solo piano climb up "Mount Ellington" in this extraordinary celebration of the composer's enduring legacy. Experience the timeless genius of Ellington's music, brilliantly reimaged by Moran and paired with iconic images of The Duke by legendary photographer Gordon Parks.

Parks, whose documentation of the lived experiences of African Americans—especially during the civil rights movement—inspired empathy, encouraged cultural and political criticism, and sparked activism and inspiration among those who viewed his work. Don't miss this one-night-only collaboration between three of America's most prolific artists.

Tomeka Reid, *Celebrating Ellington*

Kennedy Center Co-commission with Pierre Boulez Saal

April 24, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Terrace Theater

Described as a "New Jazz Power Source" by the *New York Times*, Tomeka Reid—D.C. native, 2022 MacArthur "Genius Grant" Fellow, and cellist extraordinaire—presents her groundbreaking new work inspired by Duke Ellington. Be among the first to witness this fusion of tradition and innovation as Reid seamlessly captures the essence of Ellington, all while propelling jazz into bold new territories. Lose yourself in the spirit of a genius reimaged through the lens of one of today's most visionary artists.

Three Keys to Ellington: Justin Kauflin, José André Montaña, Matthew Whitaker

Presented with the Kennedy Center's Office of VSA/Access

April 26, 2024 at 7 & 9 p.m., Terrace Theater

Each year, outstanding young musicians with disabilities from around the world are selected to receive the Kennedy Center's VSA International Young Musicians Award. At this Ellington-inspired piano showcase, we spotlight three ferociously talented winners: Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition semifinalist and 2007 *Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead* graduate Justin Kauflin, Kennedy Center "Next 50" Leader José André Montaña, and 2018 *Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead* graduate Matthew Whitaker.

Cyrus Chestnut: Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert*

April 29, 2024 at 8 p.m., Concert Hall

There has never been a more important time to celebrate the intersection of civil liberties and the music Duke Ellington called "the most important thing I have ever done."

During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, Ellington composed three large-scale works incorporating dancers, choruses, gospel singers, and his Duke Ellington Orchestra. He called them the "Sacred Concerts," created to bring the great musical traditions of Harlem's Cotton Club into the world's most revered churches—and to showcase African American excellence across a wide range of styles. At this once-in-a-lifetime event, renowned pianist, composer, and producer **Cyrus Chestnut** brings his epic interpretation of the Sacred Concerts to life. Don't miss a rare performance of this joyful music embracing the gospel, jazz, blues, swing, and classical styles that defined The Duke's work and spirituality.

Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival 2024

Hosted by NEA Jazz Master Dee Dee Bridgewater

May 10 & 11, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Terrace Theater

Dee Dee Bridgewater hosts the Kennedy Center's 27th Annual *Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival*, a two-day celebration honoring the "first lady of jazz" Mary Lou Williams (1910-1981) and the phenomenal women who continue to shape the genre.

On Friday, we spotlight bass virtuoso Endea Owens—whose ecstatic blend of classic and contemporary makes her one of the most vibrant artists in the jazz world today—along with Grammy®-winning Brazilian pianist and singer Eliane Elias.

Saturday's performance features award-winning trumpeter, composer, and dean of Manhattan School of Music's jazz division Ingrid Jensen, celebrated for her engaging, harmonically sophisticated, post-bop style. Led by the award-winning Native American vocalist, Julia Keefe's Indigenous Big Band joins the lineup to showcase the Indigenous roots of jazz.

Jason Moran and Alicia Hall Moran: *Family Ball*

June 7, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Terrace Theater

Before celebrated mezzo-soprano Alicia Hall Moran married, her mother gave her sage advice: “don't get with anybody unless you like their problems.” This sentiment is at the center of their new theatrical production *Family Ball*. Jason says, "Alicia's songs rock my world and it's a joy to hear the stories behind the compositions." The work reaffirms why the two fell in love. Encompassing their iconic blend of music and theater, *Family Ball* is intensely entertaining and visually stimulating as the piece is set in their Harlem apartment. Created during the pandemic, *Family Ball* is a creative feast, but more importantly, it's a love note.

FUNDING CREDITS

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TICKET INFORMATION

Subscriptions to all Jazz 2023–2024 season series are available now via the Kennedy Center Subscription Office or [website](#). Groups of 20 or more may contact Kennedy Center Group Sales at (202) 416-8400. Dates for sale of individual tickets will be announced later this year on www.kennedy-center.org.

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