

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Cancels Most Previously Scheduled Performances Through the End of 2020 Due to COVID-19 and Plans New In-Person and Digital Programming

The Kennedy Center Honors and Mark Twain Prize for American Humor to be presented in 2021

(WASHINGTON)— The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts will cancel most previously announced performances and events through the end of 2020 with some planned programs moving to spring 2021 and beyond, due to the ongoing effects of COVID-19 and in accordance with D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser’s current guidelines for re-opening. The Center’s leadership, programming, and education teams are exploring digital and, in consultation with health and safety experts, physical methods of enacting the mission of the nation’s cultural center and engaging with artists and audiences as our country and region moves through phased reopening.

New programming working within the Mayor’s guidelines will be announced in July. It will feature new events curated to take advantage of the Center’s diverse indoor spaces and more than 130,000 square feet of outdoor green space to create physically distant programming, and will include some previously planned performances relocated into different venues.

“Our lives as we have known them have been upended by COVID-19, but the world continues to spin forward and we need artists now more than ever to help light the way,” said Kennedy Center President Deborah Rutter. “I am deeply proud of our staff and artists who have been forging new digital stages for audiences in the nation’s capital and across the country, and I am equally excited by the work being done to safely allow us to experience the arts once again in person as well. For our patrons with tickets to fall performances, we do ask for your patience and flexibility as we readjust season schedules.”

The Kennedy Center’s signature, nationally televised, annual fall events have been postponed. The 43rd annual Kennedy Center Honors will take place on March 7, 2021, and air at a later date on CBS. The 23rd Mark Twain Prize for American Humor will be presented on June 20, 2021, prior to a later broadcast on PBS. The National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) Opening Night Gala,

scheduled for September 26, 2020, will not be held. Instead, the orchestra will be launching a special effort to support the NSO as it celebrates its 90th season in 2020-2021.

As a result of these necessary cancellations and postponements, the Kennedy Center expects to lose an estimated \$45.7 million in ticket sales and other earned income during the 2020-2021 season. As such, the Center is looking at cost savings across the institution to protect as many staff and artistic positions as possible, and is beginning discussions with its constituent union partners to that effect. The plan to present new, modified activity through the end of 2020 will allow the Center to continue to maintain some level of artistic and administrative staff until the anticipated full reopening.

Updated seasons of what the Center hopes to present beginning in January 2021 for the NSO and Washington National Opera (WNO), expanded digital offerings, and the new seasons for theater, ballet and dance, and theater for young audiences will be announced later this summer. The previously announced Fortas chamber music series is being re-evaluated with the hope that some programs can be presented safely this fall in alternate venues. For subscribers holding tickets to affected performances, the ticket value will be placed on account and representatives from the Kennedy Center will be in contact with options once the amended seasons have been announced. More information for subscribers can be found [HERE](#).

Since its closure on March 13, 2020, the Kennedy Center has provided a wide range of at-home programming that has received more than 26 million views on YouTube and over 30 million views on Facebook. A full list of programs and links to view them can be found on the [Kennedy Center at Home](#) webpage.

Funding Credits

CBS is the Exclusive Sponsor of the Kennedy Center Honors.

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

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

Capital One® is the Presenting Sponsor of the 23rd annual Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize for American Humor.

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