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**FOR RELEASE:**

August 25, 2021

## **Kennedy Center's *50th Anniversary Celebration Concert***

**September 14, 2021 at 8:00 p.m. in the Concert Hall  
to be broadcast on PBS on October 1, 2021**

**Abigail Barlow and Emily Bear, Ray Chen, Robert Glasper,  
Joshua Henry, Bettye LaVette, Kelli O'Hara, Gaby Moreno,  
Kelly Marie Tran, Zhu Wang, Mo Willems,  
the original cast of David Henry Hwang and Jeanine Tesori's *Soft Power*,  
host Audra McDonald, and special guest Caroline Kennedy**

**join previously announced artists including  
Elizabeth Acevedo, Herman Cornejo, Renée Fleming, Ben Folds, Randall Goosby,  
Christian McBride, Keb' Mo', Rachael Price, Punch Brothers, Cassandra Trenary,  
Tony Yazbeck, and more**

**JoAnn Falletta, Steven Reineke, and Thomas Wilkins to Conduct**

**Directed and Choreographed by Joshua Bergasse**

(WASHINGTON)— The Kennedy Center's ***50th Anniversary Celebration Concert***, to be held on September 14 in the Concert Hall, will now be broadcast across the nation on October 1 at 9 p.m. ET as ***THE KENNEDY CENTER at 50*** on PBS, PBS.org, and the PBS video app. Echoing "An American Pageant for the Arts," the 1962 fundraising telecast for the National Cultural Center hosted by Leonard Bernstein, this special celebration will be hosted by six-time Tony Award® winner **Audra McDonald** with special guest **Caroline Kennedy** and feature the **National Symphony Orchestra** (NSO). The concert will be directed and choreographed by Emmy Award® winner and Tony Award® nominee **Joshua Bergasse** and feature newly announced conductors **JoAnn Falletta, Steven Reineke, and Thomas Wilkins**.

“I am delighted that viewers across the country will be able to take part in the 50th Anniversary of the Kennedy Center through this special PBS broadcast,” said Kennedy Center president Deborah Rutter. “I offer my continued well wishes for Michael Tilson Thomas on his journey to health as we carry forward his vision for the evening with JoAnn, Steven, Thomas, and all of these incredible artists whose work spans the breadth and depth of the performing arts in America. This promises to be an unmissable evening in celebration of the National Cultural Center and memorial to John F. Kennedy.”

“PBS is honored to partner with the Kennedy Center as it celebrates five decades of extraordinary theater, dance and music. Performing arts are central to the cultural fabric of our nation, and we are excited to mark this wonderful occasion by showcasing these talented artists with audiences across the country,” said Paula Kerger, PBS President & CEO.

Newly announced to take part in celebrating the great performance traditions that have enriched our varied cultural heritage and the bright future that lies ahead are **Abigail Barlow** and **Emily Bear**, creators of the TikTok smash *The Unofficial Bridgerton Musical*; violinist **Ray Chen**; Tony® and Grammy Award® nominee **Joshua Henry**; four-time Grammy Award®-winning pianist, composer, producer, and founding Kennedy Center Hip Hop Culture Council Member **Robert Glasper**; Tony Award® winner **David Henry Hwang** and the original cast of his and **Jeanine Tesori**’s groundbreaking musical-within-a-play, *Soft Power*; Grammy®-nominated soul singer-songwriter **Bettye LaVette**; Latin Grammy® winner and Grammy Award® nominee **Gaby Moreno**; Tony Award® winner **Kelli O’Hara**; *Star Wars* and *Raya and the Last Dragon* star **Kelly Marie Tran**; pianist **Zhu Wang**; and Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence **Mo Willems** in a world premiere collaboration with Artistic Advisor to the NSO, **Ben Folds**.

They join previously announced artists, including National Poetry Slam champion and 2018 National Book Award winner **Elizabeth Acevedo**; dancer, choreographer, and tradition-bearer of Black American social dance **LaTasha Barnes**; American Ballet Theatre principal dancers **Herman Cornejo** and **Cassandra Trenary**; Kennedy Center Artistic Advisor at Large **Renée Fleming**; violinist **Randall Goosby**; Lucille Lortel Award-nominated tap dancers featured on *So You Think You Can Dance* **John Manzari** and **Leo Manzari**; Grammy Award®-winning bassist/composer **Christian McBride**; Grammy Award®-winning musician **Keb’ Mo’**; lead singer of Lake Street Drive **Rachael Price**; Grammy Award®-winning band **Punch Brothers**; and Astaire Award winner and Tony Award® nominee **Tony Yazbeck**. Activist-scholar and Piscataway tribe historian, **Dr. Gabrielle Tayac**, will participate in a land acknowledgement that will feature a performance from **Lance Fisher** and **Giovanna Gross**.

Tickets to the *50th Anniversary Celebration Concert* are available at the [Kennedy Center website](#) or by calling (202) 467-4600. To learn more about the Kennedy Center’s 50th Anniversary, click [here](#).

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