

**NATIONAL  
MEMORIAL DAY  
CONCERT** | **30<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY BROADCAST OF  
AMERICA'S NIGHT OF REMEMBRANCE:  
PBS' NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT RETURNS  
LIVE FROM THE WEST LAWN OF THE U.S. CAPITOL**

**- All-Star Line-up Hosted by Joe Mantegna and Mary McCormack  
with General Colin Powell, Sam Elliott, Patti LaBelle, Gavin DeGraw,  
Dennis Haysbert, Alison Krauss, Christopher Jackson, Amber Riley,  
Justin Moore, Jaina Lee Ortiz and the National Symphony Orchestra  
with a Special Performance of the National Anthem by  
AMERICAN IDOL Season 17 Finalist Alyssa Raghu -**

Washington, DC, May 16, 2019 – PBS's multi award-winning **NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT** returns live from the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol for a special 30th anniversary broadcast hosted by Tony Award-winner **Joe Mantegna** and Tony-nominated actress and star of TV's *THE WEST WING*, *LOADED* and *THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT*, **Mary McCormack**. The 30th annual broadcast of the **NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT** airs live on PBS **Sunday, May 26, 2019, from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. E.T.**, before a concert audience of hundreds of thousands, millions more at home, as well as to our troops serving around the world on the American Forces Network.

A 30-year tradition unlike anything else on television, America's national night of remembrance takes us back to the real meaning of the holiday through personal stories interwoven with musical performances by the National Symphony Orchestra and guest artists. The 2019 anniversary edition of the **NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT** will feature the following stories:

- **75th Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion** – featuring a performance by Academy Award-nominated actor **Sam Elliott** (*A STAR IS BORN*). The concert will share the remarkable story of 98-year-old Ray Lambert (Elliott), a highly-decorated combat medic who landed on Omaha Beach in the largest amphibious invasion in history and a pivotal step in the Allied march to victory in World War II. As part of the first wave onto shore, Lambert quickly established a treatment area, saving soldiers, dragging them to safety and comforting the dying as best he could, even while being shot twice himself. He continued his efforts before being seriously wounded. Lambert's story honors *every* man who landed on the beaches of Normandy that day.
- **Vietnam Valor and Brotherhood** – brought to life by long-time friends acclaimed actor **Dennis Haysbert** (*24*, *MAJOR LEAGUE*) and **Joe Mantegna**. Fifty years since the height of the Vietnam War, the painful memories from their service remain fresh for many of its veterans. In 1969, our soldiers continued to fulfill

their duty and carry out the missions their country asked of them. As part of a special 50th anniversary commemoration to honor the service and sacrifice of Vietnam War veterans and to thank them, the concert will share the story of two infantrymen - Ernest "Pete" Peterson (Haysbert) and Brad Kennedy (Mantegna) - who formed a brotherhood while serving in Vietnam and now meet each year at the Vietnam Wall where they remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

- **A Gold Star Widow's Journey** – portrayed by television series star **Jaina Lee Ortiz** (*STATION 19*, *ROSEWOOD*).

For Gold Star families, every day is Memorial Day. This year, the concert will share the journey of one widow - Ursula Palmer (Ortiz) - beginning with the day her worst fears came true, just two weeks before her husband was due to return home. While "moving on" from this devastating loss was not possible, Palmer knew that for the sake of her daughter she would have to learn to move forward. Along the way she found solace and empowerment by co-founding a new chapter of Gold Star Wives, a virtual chapter for post 9/11 widows and widowers, and by helping wounded veterans and their families.

The all-star line-up also includes: distinguished American leader **General Colin L. Powell USA (Ret.)**; Grammy Award-winning legend **Patti LaBelle**; multi-platinum selling singer, performer and songwriter **Gavin DeGraw**; Broadway and television star **Christopher Jackson** (*HAMILTON*, *BULL*); multi-Grammy Award-winning bluegrass icon **Alison Krauss**; SAG and Olivier Award-winning and Grammy Award-nominated actress and singer **Amber Riley** (*GLEE*, *DREAMGIRLS*); multi-platinum-selling country music star **Justin Moore**; and **Patrick Lundy & The Ministers of Music**; in performance with the **National Symphony Orchestra** under the direction of top pops conductor **Jack Everly**. *AMERICAN IDOL* Season 17 finalist **Alyssa Ragh** joins the show for a special performance of the "National Anthem."

Also participating in the event are the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff with The U.S. Army Herald Trumpets, The U.S. Army Chorus and Army Voices, The Soldiers' Chorus of the U.S. Army Field Band, The U.S. Navy Band Sea Chanters, The U.S. Air Force Singing Sergeants, the Armed Forces Color Guard and Service Color Teams provided by the Military District of Washington, D.C.

The concert will also be streaming live on Facebook, YouTube and [www.pbs.org/national-memorial-day-concert](http://www.pbs.org/national-memorial-day-concert) and available as Video on Demand, May 26 to June 9, 2019.

The program is a co-production of Michael Colbert of Capital Concerts and WETA, Washington, D.C. Executive producer Michael Colbert has assembled an award-winning production team that features the top Hollywood talent behind some of television's most prestigious entertainment awards shows including the *GRAMMY AWARDS*, *COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS*, *TONY AWARDS*, *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE*, and more.

### **About Capital Concerts**

Capital Concerts is the nation's leading producer of live patriotic television shows, including PBS's highest-rated performance specials: **NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT** and **A CAPITOL FOURTH**, the premier celebrations of America's most important holidays broadcast from the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. For more than 35 years, these two award-winning productions have become national traditions, bringing us together as one family of

Americans to celebrate our freedom and democratic ideals and to pay tribute to those who defend them. The holiday specials have been honored with over 80 awards including the New York Film Festival Award, the Golden Cine Award, and the Writer's Guild of America Award.

**Underwriters**

The ***NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT*** is made possible by grants from the Lockheed Martin Corporation, USAA, the National Park Service, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Department of the Army, General Dynamics, PBS and public television stations nationwide. Air travel is provided by American Airlines.

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