



The
Kennedy
Center

FY 2020 Annual Report





Letter from Chairman **David M. Rubenstein** and President **Deborah F. Rutter**



In one of the quotes inscribed on the Center’s walls, President Kennedy posited that our society would “be remembered...for our contribution to the human spirit.” As we reflect on this year, we focus on the ways we embraced our namesake’s challenge and, even during an unprecedented global crisis, embodied and celebrated the human spirit.

In that light, it is with gratitude we present the annual report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020. These pages tell a narrative from the early performances at the REACH soon after its exciting opening, to our leadership in arts education and inclusion, to how we adapted our programming during the pandemic for consumption online or in innovative, small-capacity formats.

The 2019–2020 season was to be a celebration of the Center preparing for our coming landmark 50th Anniversary Season. The year unfolded and the world changed, but our commitment to the arts did not. Our kitchen tables became our classrooms and offices. Our couches became our theater seats and our TVs and computers our stages. Through it all, the arts and the human spirit sustained us. Building on resources refined over the past 50 years, we transitioned to digital platforms, accelerated plans in the social justice sphere, and collaborated with artists to amplify

all voices on our stages—digital and in-person. We adapted, we learned, and we drew on our strengths and community to meet the moment. Now, the most important thing we can do is express our gratitude.

To the frontline responders and health care community—your guidance helps us safely do our part to heal through art. To our artists—your resilience gives us hope. To our donors—your generosity with your time, resources, and friendship are our lifeline and inspiration. To our current staff, volunteers, and boards—your ability to adapt is nothing short of amazing, and to the staff we had to part with—your impact lives on as part of the National Cultural Center. To our patrons—you will be back. We will be back.

If the shutdown of our arts organizations this year has taught us anything, it is that who we are and what we do is not represented by a stage or a building. The following pages tell a story of a community of artists, educators, administrators, volunteers, and arts lovers who came together to overcome by finding new ways of connecting and sharing our love of the arts. Together we guard the creativity of the human spirit for future generations. These pages tell the story of the Kennedy Center we have created together over the past 50 years, and will continue to create for the next 50 to come.



At left: Samuel Gather GO4tet performs an afternoon *Arts Across America* concert at the REACH River Pavilion for a masked and socially distanced outdoor audience.

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A Season of Change

*WHEN THE
WORLD CHANGED,
WE CHANGED WITH IT.*

COVID-19 threatened the core of our work, turning the joy of gathering into an unexpected danger. No one went untouched by the pandemic, and we grieved alongside all who were impacted—especially our patrons, artists, and staff.

And yet, we looked for hope. In his 1962 State of the Union address, President Kennedy said, “Every area of trouble gives out a ray of hope; and the one unchangeable certainty is that nothing is certain or unchangeable.” So as the world changed, we changed with it. The new ideas, initiatives, and strategies that were already growing in our institution became “rays of hope” that we leaned on to propel us forward. We found new ways to inspire and reach our patrons, no matter where they were. We found that art and culture help sustain us during the most challenging of times.

Renée Fleming and Vanessa Williams present the inaugural On Stage at the Opera House concert, *A Time to Sing*, for a small audience with distanced seating.



Creating Authentic Digital Connections



Above: After the live performance in September, Renée Fleming and Vanessa Williams's *A Time to Sing* concert was streamed more than 13,000 times from the Digital Stage platform.

As “stay-at-home” orders were issued in March 2020, patrons began to engage with our digital content in new ways. Our digital reach helped bring the arts into homes across the country and around the world—and the numbers showed it. On Facebook, Kennedy Center followers nearly doubled, with an increase of 97.68%. Video viewership more than tripled by several metrics, and user engagement with video more than doubled.

While the Kennedy Center was closed to the public, we launched **Couch Concerts by Millennium Stage**. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, we invited talented artists to perform from their homes for a live concert streamed online.

The Couch Concerts series later expanded into **Arts Across America**. In collaboration with arts organizations around the country, *Arts Across America* showcased live online performances from 47 states, four territories, and Washington, D.C. During 20+ weeks of programming, artists helped us connect, grieve, heal, and move forward—all from the safety of our homes.

Artists were physically separated but created inspiring performances nevertheless. In Washington National Opera’s “Humming Chorus” directed by Principal Conductor Evan Rogister, members of the **Washington National Opera Orchestra and Chorus** and the **Cafritz Young Artists** recorded themselves humming the chorus from

Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. When pieced together in unison, the voices created a powerful performance.

Through **NSO@Home**, members of the Orchestra shared videos of at-home performances, sometimes appearing with their families. Orchestra members also presented live performances streamed digitally—with NSO Music Director Gianandrea Noseda often participating from his home in Italy!

With digital engagement more important than ever before, we explored how virtual content could create the rich, interactive, and immersive experiences our patrons expected. No one mastered this quite like Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence **Mo Willems**, who invited patrons into his studio for weekday virtual **LUNCH DOODLES**. Artists of all ages joined Mo for 15 filmed episodes of interactive doodling, spurring hundreds of submissions to #MoLunchDoodles on social media and a feature on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.

Donors joined the fun as special events went virtual. During exclusive online events, donors connected with one another and enjoyed live music, in-depth



conversations with artists, and even special eat-at-home menus from local restaurants.

As life moved online, we welcomed patrons to our Digital Stage, where we streamed extraordinary archived performances from the Kennedy Center's stages and beyond, including new releases daily, special series, and original stories. We invited patrons to explore our vast archive collection of thousands of videos, giving them a front row seat to powerful artistic moments.



Top: *Arts Across America's* 20 weeks of concerts reached viewers worldwide with performances by artists from 75 cities, 47 states and D.C., and four U.S. territories.

At left: NSO@Home brought intimate concerts from National Symphony Orchestra members who gave viewers a peek into their personal lives.

“The Show Must Go On”

The Kennedy Center was among the very first arts organizations in the country to experiment with indoor performances again and discovered an innovative way to accommodate live, small-capacity audiences while also live-streaming the event to thousands. The famed Opera House came back to life on September 26 with **On Stage at the Opera House**, a unique concert experience that put the audience (quite literally) back on the stage. Four-time Grammy Award® winner and National Medal of the Arts recipient **Renée Fleming** and Emmy®, Grammy®, and Tony Award® nominee **Vanessa Williams** teamed up to perform the historic program—featuring songs by Sting, Stephen Sondheim, Benjamin Britten, and Joni Mitchell—from a stage extension built into the front of the

Orchestra-seating level of the hall while concert-goers were seated in physically distanced pairs on the Opera House stage.

“The real breakthrough was a dimension that would not have been worth mentioning half a year ago: It was staged before a live audience. ...And it turned the electricity back on.” (Peter Marks, *The Washington Post*)

After the successful inaugural performance, we invited more performers to our On Stage at the Opera House series. Small groups of patrons attended the live performances and even more tuned in from around the world for the virtual streams.

Faced with the challenges of venue closures due to the pandemic, **Washington National Opera** decided

Through in-person, digital, and community programming, the Kennedy Center navigated the challenges of 2020 with the belief that art heals.





The WNO Pop-Up Opera Truck's debut at Johns Hopkins Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, MD moved doctors, nurses, and administrators to tears when baritone Jonathan Bryan sang "The Impossible Dream" in gratitude for their courage and service.

to take the show on the road and visit neighborhoods in the metropolitan area in person. Throughout the fall, the **WNO Pop-Up Opera Truck** brought performances to front-line workers and families in the area at outdoor parks and parking lots. WNO's **Cafritz Young Artists** performed on a converted moving truck-turned-mobile concert stage provided by The Concert Truck. In conjunction with community partners, the Cafritz Young Artists offered short programs of opera and classical music's greatest hits, sparking joy and connection in a time of social separation.

Launched in September, the NSO's nationally recognized ***In Your Neighborhood*** program brought a series of live performances by NSO musicians to D.C.-area frontline healthcare workers. These small-capacity and physically distanced ensemble performances supported and

honored the brave medical field workers on the nation's frontlines during the pandemic. A range of events took place at Grand Oaks, an assisted living facility in Northwest D.C.; Sibley Memorial Hospital in D.C.; Inova Schar Center in Fairfax, VA; Howard University Hospital in D.C.; Inova Loudon Hospital and Inova Fairfax Hospital, both in VA; and Walter Reed Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. In addition, members of the **Washington National Opera Orchestra** and **Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra** also offered concerts for frontline workers at George Washington University Hospital and other locations.

Throughout the summer and early fall, musicians from the NSO and KCOHO/WNOO presented "**Porch Concerts**" for neighbors in their own communities, sharing the joy and beauty of live music one small block at a time.

A Haven for Safe Gathering: The REACH

When the REACH opened to the masses in 2019, a key feature was the new café area in the River Pavilion offering premier green landscapes overlooking the Potomac. In response to the pandemic and the need for safe outdoor gathering spaces, the Kennedy Center collaborated in early summer with the culinary creative team of The Hilton

Brothers and Chef Erik Bruner-Yang to envision **Victura Park**, a family-friendly outdoor oasis and pop-up. Dotted with picnic and café tables and shade umbrellas, Victura Park quickly emerged as a popular summer and early fall destination for locals eager to reconnect in a safe, socially-distant environment.



As D.C. entered later phases of reopening in the summer, the River Pavilion became the stage for the Kennedy Center's **Sunset Concerts**, a series of free hour-long concerts featuring performances from WNO's Cafritz Young Artists, NSO musicians, and local artists representing jazz, hip hop, musical theater, and dance.

Taking place on a stage inside the pavilion with glass walls opening up for the enjoyment of physically distanced 50-person audiences spread outdoors, these intimate serenades along the river provided rare opportunities for live performance in the summer of 2020.



A small audience enjoys a Sunset Concert by Washington National Opera Young Cafritz Artists at the River Pavilion in the REACH.

Education Reimagined

*LEARNING THROUGH
THE ARTS—
AT HOME, ONLINE,
ACROSS THE NATION*

The work of educators and the lives of students and families changed drastically. And yet, despite obstacles and new circumstances, resilience and innovation continued to shine. Through a deep commitment to providing support and resources for educators and impactful experiences for students and families, the Kennedy Center’s education programs reached more than 1.3 million students through school and community programs, and virtual offerings have been accessed more than 3.3 million times.

At right: Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence Mo Willems created a wildly popular series of video shows for children that encouraged creativity, empathy, and gratitude.



LET'S
DOODLE
TOGETHER!





Above: During the shutdown, Kennedy Center field trips went virtual, expanding their reach beyond local students to children across the nation. Here NSO violinist Heather LeDoux Green and bassist Paul DeNola mix classical music and clowning in *The String Thing*.

Arts Education Persists— Sharing Knowledge

Across programs such as **Partners in Education** and **Any Given Child**, the Kennedy Center remains an industry-leading national hub for arts organizations, practitioners, and educators to gather, share knowledge and problem-solve. Conversations on equitable practices and access in arts education continued digitally through the pandemic, and grew to address anti-racism, culturally responsive teaching, and the pivot to digital teaching and learning.

Cited by the United Nations as an exemplar of a Cultural Rights Defender, the Kennedy Center's **Office of VSA and Accessibility**, which annually serves over 20,000 students with disabilities, consulted with dozens of cultural organizations, hosted major convenings for thought leaders, and launched a new digital national network for the field around the confluence of art, professional education, and disability, gaining more than 400 members within the first three months.

Stage to Screens

In the first half of the season, 27,989 students from 287 local schools attended **Performances for Young Audiences** including new NSO Music for Young Audiences programs and Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences world premiere commissions of *Kid Prince and Pablo*, a digital age hip hop story from two-time Joseph Jefferson Award winner Brian Quijada, and the Helen Hayes Award-winning *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! (The Musical)*, based on the Caldecott Honor book by Education Artist-in-Residence Mo Willems.

Before ending early, a national tour of *Pigeon* hit the road, traveling 9,232 miles to bring unbridled silliness and heart to 40,968 people in 19 cities. To continue bringing compelling performing arts to young audiences during the pandemic, the Kennedy Center engaged with artists and companies whose on-site performances had been canceled to create **Virtual Field Trips**, which now have garnered more than 100,000 views.

Artist-in-Residence, from his Residence

The day after the Kennedy Center closed its doors to help stop the spread of COVID-19, Education Artist-in-Residence **Mo Willems** didn't just ask what he could do to help, he came up with an idea to engage with the millions of students no longer able to attend school in-person. **LUNCH DOODLES with Mo Willems**, a three-week video series exploring ways of sparking creativity at home, began the next week. The fun and creativity has continued on with *Thank You Thursdays!*, *The Yo-Yo Mo Show* with acclaimed cellist Yo-Yo

Ma, and *The SMALL WORKS Project*, celebrating heroes affecting change in small ways—from a father who built desk dividers for his child’s classroom to three brothers who handed out sports drinks to essential workers and people experiencing homelessness. With more than 12 million views on YouTube alone, these videos have captivated learners around the world, reaping attention from media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Today Show*, NPR, *The Tonight Show*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Engaging At-Home Learners with Digital Education Resources

As the world turned to online resources for teaching and learning, the Kennedy Center responded with a new **Digital Learning website** filled with remote teaching and learning resources including 60 re-written and revised lesson plans, newly created videos, interactive media, articles, and two fully online courses for teachers working with students with special needs, developed with the Office of VSA and Accessibility.

Below: Kennedy Center Education hosted its National Community Partnerships Convening, bringing together arts organizations nationwide that are developing or expanding educational partnerships with their local school systems.





Kennedy Center Education by the Numbers

The Kennedy Center's Education Division reaches all 50 states, Washington, D.C., one U.S. territory, and four countries.

3.3 million participants were reached through virtual programming

1.3 million students were reached through school and community programs

78,043 audience members were reached through Education performances and programs

40,968 audience members attended the national tour of *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! (The Musical)*

10,328 professionals participated in workshops and conferences

240 student artists were trained through Kennedy Center career development programs

155 performances for Young Audiences were given at the Kennedy Center

The Promise of Tomorrow, Virtually Today

For decades, summer at the Kennedy Center has been a time when aspiring young artists come together to build community, hone their craft, and chart their career paths. This year, although the world has changed, we recognized that our support for these artists should not. And so, in July and August, 177 emerging visionaries, change-makers, and culture-shapers from 30 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, Mexico, and the United Kingdom gathered virtually through the **NSO Summer Music Institute**, **WNO Opera Institute**, **Kennedy Center Dance Lab**, and the **Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival Summer Intensives**.

The digital format provided students with critical career tools, high-caliber training, and impactful experiences with esteemed artists from across the country including **Misty Copeland**, **Leslie Odom Jr.**, **Hope Boykin**, and **Marin Alsop**.

"This was the most valuable experience so far in my dance life. I have gained so much confidence, inspiration, and insight into what I can become as an artist," said a 2020 Kennedy Center Dance Lab participant.



MOONSHOT STUDIO

More than 10,000 patrons visited the Moonshot Studio at the REACH from October 2019–March 2020. In this flexible maker space, they could sketch like Mo Willems, explore the words and ideals of JFK through poetry and visual art, build sound mixes, or even take part in an interactive dance and technology experience. The energy and joy of the Moonshot Studio can now be experienced digitally through **Moonshot@Home**.

Opposite: Kennedy Center Performances for Young Audiences commissioned and premiered the hip hop musical *Kid Prince and Pablo* from brothers Brian and Marvin Quijada.

Above: Mo Willems' *LUNCH DOODLES!* came to the rescue for shut-in families across the country, providing hours of art and entertainment.



Creating Social Impact

*TURNING SYMBOLIC
GESTURES INTO
TANGIBLE SYSTEMS*

On June 2, 2020 we made a public statement to hold this institution accountable, promising to create more strategies to support Black lives, Black artists, and Black culture, and that the Kennedy Center will always be a home for critical conversations about race and discrimination. As the National Cultural Center, our institution has a unique and urgent responsibility to turn symbolic gestures into tangible systems. We recognize that words might garner attention, but it is the essence and the constancy of our actions that will effect broad-scale change within our campus and throughout the performing arts industry.



At right: *The Just and the Blind*, conceived and written by Marc Bamuthi Joseph, illuminates the unseen and under-heard experiences of incarcerated youth.



On July 9, the Center introduced a Social Impact framework, outlining a multi-pronged, five-year strategy to advance our anti-racism and equity efforts, both in our local communities and on a national scale. Driven by the Social Impact team under the leadership of **Marc Bamuthi Joseph**, the Kennedy Center has defined eight intersecting channels of work that it will prioritize, pursue, and weave into the Center's cross-disciplinary organizational practices to redefine and recommit to its identity as the National Cultural Center. These are not intended to be immediate solutions, but iterative strategies that will enable the Center to foster systemic anti-racism within the organization and across the performing arts. While several Social Impact initiatives have been in operation or development for several years, the Center is accelerating plans to amplify the work and see significant progress in all eight channels over the next 3–5 years.

Below: *Arts Across America* gives artists from communities across the country—such as Washington, D.C.'s Samuel Prather and the G.O! 4tet—a national viewership through the Center's online channels.

Opposite: The REACH is activated through a lens of public health with Frontline Worker Appreciation Days, offering free programming to our neighboring grocers, pharmacy workers, health care professionals, and their families.



REACH Activations Prioritizing Public Health

We commit to re-igniting institutional programming at the REACH through a public health lens to prioritize physical, psychological, and social/sociological health.

#BlackCultureMatters

We commit to co-design programs and provide workshop space at the REACH for organizations and creatives that address four areas as a central component of their anti-racist work: Wealth, Beauty (including culture, health, humanity, joy, and self-concept), Law, and Housing. #BlackCultureMatters signals the Center's move to adopt new strategies that use art as a starting place to generate attention and resources for Black audiences and communities nationwide.

Investment in our Local Creative Economy

The statements the Kennedy Center makes on a national level can only be validated if they are authenticated on the local level. Through an array of artistic and educational initiatives, the Center invests in the creative economy and cultural equity of its home city. These initiatives foster a creative community of practice in Washington, D.C., enabling collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Residency and incubator programs invite local cultural leaders to activate the REACH as a hub for creative thought and community practice, and include Social Practice Residencies, Office Hours, Dance Sanctuaries, and Culture Caucus provide financial resources and opportunities, and build a greater sense of trust, belonging, and agency at the local level.

Cultural Leadership

We commit to identify and support cultural leaders whose practices will shape our future, while providing a consistent platform for their thought leadership. This work is a continuation of the Center’s longstanding investment with programs such as its annual Arts Summit and Citizen Artist Fellows, a cohort of artists from across the country who use their art forms to create positive impact in their communities.

The Cartography Project

A new curatorial program led by the **National Symphony Orchestra** and **Washington National Opera**, The Cartography Project embraces equity and pursues diverse, contemporary art makers to engage in pressing social issues through classical music. Inspired by the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, this initiative will use music as both a source of healing and a way to open a dialogue about an anti-racist future. The first iteration of The Cartography Project will commission composers, librettists, and artists in Atlanta, Aurora, Baltimore, Cleveland, Louisville, Minneapolis, New York, and Oakland to create a musical map of extrajudicial violence across the country.

Arts Across America

In collaboration with the nation’s six Regional Arts Organizations serving all 50 states and U.S. territories, *Arts Across America* presents free, online programming available on Facebook Live, Instagram, YouTube, and the Kennedy Center website. Through *Arts Across America*, the Center has broadened its curatorial lens, showcasing culture-makers who play leadership roles in their communities,



exemplify unique regional artistic styles, and use their medium as a tool for advocacy and social justice.

Internal Channels Qualitative Metrics | Sub-Communications Strategy

The Kennedy Center is deeply focused on better evaluating itself as an anti-racist organization and has created two internally-facing channels of work to guide its implementation. We are

developing tools to measure the efficacy of its processes from a relational standpoint, creating institutional accountability in how it engages the community and implements its philosophies and learnings. Additionally, the Center is exploring how alternative language, aesthetics, and modalities could play a key role in communicating more directly and successfully with new constituency groups and historically marginalized communities.



Above: Office Hours gives artists of all disciplines the time and space to explore and develop their creative work.

Below: Citizen Artists Fellows bring their community experience from across the country to exchange ideas and strategies for creating positive impact.

Over the last several decades, the Kennedy Center has built an extensive network of artists, educators, cultural organizations, and education agencies that work on the ground with communities in all 50 states.

While these individuals and organizations intersect with the eight channels outlined on the preceding pages in many and varied ways, each brings unique expertise and invaluable perspective to the table.

As the Center ingrains the philosophy of Social Impact into the fabric of its organizational practice, it will draw on and expand this network in order

to build a more empowered ecology of educators, artists, and culture-producers.

Following are some of the initiatives through which the Kennedy Center collaborates with and invests in artists and cultural organizations. This commitment to direct investment is reflected in these and other artistic and educational initiatives which will operate under the new Social Impact framework.

Culture Caucus

A hyper-local investment in the creative economy, the Culture Caucus fosters a sense of belonging and agency at the Kennedy Center.

Supporting an assembly of more than 20 D.C.-based individuals, organizations, and initiatives, the Culture Caucus offers ample opportunities for networking and collaboration, guarantees access to much-needed space, and prioritizes the development of new creative work and cultural strategies.

Over the course of their two-year engagement with the Kennedy Center,



Culture Caucus members receive a \$20,000 stipend, micro-commissions, and production support in the REACH, opportunities to curate digital content spotlighting voices from the D.C. community, and access to annual convenings and curated events.

Citizen Artist Fellows

The Citizen Artist Fellows program celebrates and uplifts a group of artists across the country who use their art forms to create a positive impact in their communities.

Through skill- and network-building, in addition to customized resources and support, the year-long Citizen Artist program enables these artists to elevate their work, broaden their impact, and continue to create meaningful change in their communities.

Citizen Artist Fellows are nominated and chosen from five regions through a competitive selection process, and represent the overall diversity of the national audience the Center strives to reflect and serve.

Office Hours

The Kennedy Center invites artists to experiment and develop new work as they maintain regular “office hours” to create and interact with the public.

Office Hours brings local and national artists to the Kennedy Center for short-term residencies to incubate new artistic works. To eliminate barriers to access, each Resident receives a \$10,000 stipend to cover travel and lodging. The program is a manifestation of the Center’s commitment to prioritizing the creative process.

Below: An investment in the local creative economy, the Culture Caucus offers individuals, organizations, and initiatives in D.C. opportunities for networking, collaboration, and development.



Before the World Shifted

*ADVANCING AMERICAN
CULTURE AND
CONVERSATION*

We will always remember the 2019–2020 season for the pandemic that brought a sudden, unexpected intermission to our theaters. But before that—before the world shifted—our season held artistic moments that could only happen within this unique living memorial. In these bustling halls, artists and leaders from every discipline came together to inspire audiences in new ways and move culture in new directions.

At right: Brandon Victor Dixon, Rachel Bay Jones, and Michael Park in the Kennedy Center *Broadway Center Stage* production of *Next to Normal*



2019–2020 Fall/Winter Season



Above: Tenor Stephen Gould and soprano Christine Goerke join Gianandrea Nosedà and the National Symphony Orchestra for their Lincoln Center performance of Act II of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*.

National Symphony Orchestra

The National Symphony Orchestra and **Gianandrea Nosedà** embarked on their third season together, building upon their promising collaboration which has been marked by growing audiences and increasing critical acclaim. The season encompassed a number of exciting firsts under Nosedà's direction including the release of the first-ever recording of the NSO with Nosedà on the Orchestra's new in-house label and their first appearance together at New York's Lincoln Center performing Act II of Wagner's revolutionary *Tristan and Isolde* featuring soprano **Christine Goerke** and tenor **Stephen Gould** to rave reviews. Soprano **Renée Fleming** returned to the NSO stage with baritone **Rod Gilfry**, under Nosedà's direction, for a performance of a co-commissioned work by Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer **Kevin Puts**. In addition, the NSO continues to demonstrate its commitment to artistic excellence, accessibility, and community, while reaching the widest possible audience.

2019 marked the ninth year of *In Your Neighborhood* which brought programs to East D.C. neighborhoods. Developed in partnership with community-based organizations, venues, schools, and local artists, this year's IYN showcased programs that celebrate the cultural legacy of Marvin Gaye in Washington, D.C., and paid homage to Chuck Brown's iconic genre of music, Go-Go, also native to the District.

Washington National Opera

Washington National Opera had prepared to present an expanded line-up featuring six main stage titles in the 2019–2020 season including what was to be the D.C. premiere of *Blue*, the **Francesca Zambello**-commissioned work by Tony Award®-winning composer **Jeanine Tesori** and librettist **Tazewell Thompson**. *Blue* won the North American Music Critics Association Award for the Best Opera of 2020. As the *Washington Post* wrote after the postponement, "*Blue* is the opera on police violence that America needs to see, but can't."

The 2019–2020 season began with Verdi's Shakespearean masterpiece *Otello*, starring tenor **Russell Thomas** in the title role. The fall repertory also included Mozart's whimsical fairy tale *The Magic Flute* featuring vivid sets designed by famed children's author Maurice Sendak. The mainstage offerings resumed in the spring with Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, featuring bass-baritone **Ryan McKinny**, and rising star mezzo-soprano **J'Nai Bridges** in Saint-Saëns's romantic *Samson and Delilah*.

In preparation for *Blue*, WNO formed a committee comprising local and national partners to collaborate on events designed to foster dialogue about the production and the themes it tackles. These talks generated ideas and programs that spoke to the value that WNO places on artistic citizenship including a partnership with the Metropolitan Police Department and the Latin American Youth Center to help build new relationships between D.C.-area young people and local police officers. The WNO convened a three-week long music-making workshop series for teens and law enforcement officers to engage with the themes of *Blue* through the creation of art.

The season also centered discussions of race in *Otello* and *Blue*, discrimination in

Samson and Delilah, and #MeToo in *Don Giovanni* in a new series of conversations, *Let's Go There*. Using opera as a prism to examine and candidly discuss questions central to contemporary culture, WNO committed itself to developing meaningful conversations that helped build greater civic understanding on topics that challenge us.

Ballet/Dance

Highlights of the ballet and dance season featured **Compagnie Centre National de Danse Contemporaine-Angers** participating in the global centennial celebration of modern dance icon Merce Cunningham, which included multiple activations across the Center's campus; **Martha Graham Dance Company** with a program created in

Below: Although the performance had to be canceled for the 2019–2020 season, Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson's timely opera *Blue* reached audiences through community events and digital content.



2019–2020 Fall/Winter Season



Above: Compagnie Centre National de Danse Contemporaine-Angers commemorates Merce Cunningham at 100 with a program including his *Beach Birds* (1991).

Below at right: Cuban director Carlos Diaz presents his visionary adaptation of Mozart's opera *La Clamenza di Tito* with singers, dancers, and the Havana Lyceum Orchestra.

celebration of the centennial of the 19th amendment; and **The National Ballet of Canada** with two programs showing the company's wide artistic range along with annual engagements of **Mariinsky Ballet, American Ballet Theatre,** and **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.**

Theater

The Kennedy Center's theater season, while interrupted, treated theatergoers to two productions from its acclaimed sold-out **Broadway Center Stage** series of hit musicals with all-star casts. First, Tony Award®-winning director **Walter Bobbie** (*Chicago*) and choreographer **Spencer Liff** (*So You Think You Can Dance*) helmed a revamped, toe-tapping **Footloose** starring **J. Quinton Johnson, Michael Park, Judy Kuhn,** and the late **Rebecca Luker**. Then, director **Michael Greif** returned to his Pulitzer Prize-winning **Next to Normal** for “the latest triumph of the

arts center's **Broadway Center Stage** series” (*Washington Post*) starring Tony Award® winner **Rachel Bay Jones** and **Brandon Victor Dixon**. Later named to the *Washington Post*'s “Best Theater of 2020” list, **Next to Normal** marks the second year in a row that a **Broadway Center Stage** production has made that list, following 2019's *The Who's Tommy*.

Highlights from Broadway included Best Musical winner across North America, **Come From Away**, returning to the city that helped launch it, and the premiere of the national tour of director Bartlett Sher's lauded Lincoln Center Theater revival of **My Fair Lady**.

International Programming

The Kennedy Center's fifth annual **Lunar New Year** celebrations, kicked-off with a concert by the **Shanghai Chinese Orchestra** under the baton of maestro **Muhai Tang**, also featured the D.C. debut of stunning **REACH Winter Lanterns**, bringing more than 42,000





people to the REACH as it glowed for two weeks with over 10,000 LED lights.

The *World Stages* series included two virtuosic performances rooted in Indian traditions—**Chandrika Tandon’s *Shivoham: The Quest*** and *The Manganiyar Seduction*, a sold-out hit from the 2011 *maximumINDIA* festival—and **Carlos Diaz** and the **Havana Lyceum Orchestra’s** visionary Cuban adaptation of Mozart’s *La Clemenza di Tito*. Three daring theater productions came to the Center through an ongoing collaboration with the Sundance Institute Theater Program: *Grey Rock* (Palestine) by Amir Nizar Zuabi, *Huff* (Canada) by Cree playwright Cliff Cardinal, and the U.S. premiere of Mary Wells’s *Heroine, a Female Soldier’s Story* (Scotland).

At the REACH campus, playwrights,

poets, and writers of African heritage living in Africa and the Diaspora, including the United States, gathered for an historic special literary mini-series, *BOUNDLESS: Africa*, combining performances, panel discussions, and readings in collaboration with the Alan Cheuse International Writers Center at George Mason University.

Comedy

In the world of Comedy, laughter filled the halls as top-tier comedians **David Sedaris**, **Nick Offerman**, **Janeane Garofalo**, **Marc Maron**, **Maz Jobrani**, and the group **Wild Horses** brought their utterly original worldviews to packed houses. Funny, unique theatrical experiences delighted audiences through the uproarious **Improvvised Shakespeare Company** and the podcast *No Such Thing*

Above: Mariinsky Ballet performs the U.S. premiere of its lavish new production of Marius Petipa’s rarely-performed full ballet *Paquita*.

2019–2020 Fall/Winter Season



Above: Hip hop artist Mumu Fresh performs at the BGR!FEST™ Secret Show.

as a *Fish*, and March brought a special International Women’s Day comedy event, *RIOT!*, featuring **Margaret Cho**, **Dulcé Sloan**, **Sasheer Zamata**, **Jen Kirkman**, and **Catherine Cohen**.

Fortas Chamber Music Concerts

In its 38th season and 23rd under the leadership of **Joseph Kalichstein**, the Fortas Chamber Music Concerts featured signature varied offerings with repertoire spanning a millennium, from the 11th century to today, and ensembles ranging from the core configurations of chamber music—piano trios and string quartets—to boundary breakers in the field. Highlights included the **Takács Quartet** opening up the season with a crowning achievement of 20th-century string quartets—the complete cycle by Bartók; **Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio** in its annual appearance on the series in a program

honoring Beethoven’s upcoming 250th birthday in 2020; the male vocal ensemble **Cantus** in the D.C. premiere of *Alone Together*, a new work by American composer **Libby Larsen**; and the second year of a three-year residency of **The Dover Quartet**.

Jazz

In its ninth year with Artistic Director for Jazz **Jason Moran** at the helm, the Kennedy Center reaffirmed its commitment to engage jazz artists and audiences to build the future of jazz. Celebrating the 20th anniversary of his acclaimed jazz trio, **The Bandwagon**, bandmates **Tarus Mateen** (bass) and **Nasheet Waits** (drums) joined Moran with concerts reflecting their 20-year musical journey, to display their wide-ranging talent with some of their most creative friends, including **Cassandra Wilson**, **Marvin Sewell**, and **Ingrid Laubrock**.

Season highlights also included marquee performances from: jazz drummer, pianist, and vibraphonist **Joe Chambers** of Max Roach’s M’Boom percussion ensemble; and the **Art Ensemble of Chicago**, featuring newly announced NEA Jazz Master **Roscoe Mitchell**, in a performance commemorating the group’s 50th anniversary and the start of the avant-garde jazz movement.

Renée Fleming VOICES

In its fourth season Renée Fleming’s *VOICES* series celebrated the vitality and versatility of the human voice and artistry through song, bringing performances by outstanding performers

from a wide range of genres including Broadway, jazz, pop, folk, and opera. The season featured performances from Broadway's leading man **Gavin Creel**, opera star **Joyce DiDonato**, and stage star **Norm Lewis**.

Hip Hop Culture

The Hip Hop Culture season continued to celebrate the history of the genre, but also looked to the future by highlighting powerful women, pivotal creatives, and events that captured the breadth and influence of the Culture. Presentations included the second annual BLACK GIRLS ROCK! Festival™. Curated to celebrate the cultural contributions of Black women artists, the festival took place in early March over International Women's Day weekend with performances from multi-GRAMMY® Award-winning vocalist and icon **Ms. Lauryn Hill**, powerhouse vocalist **Alice Smith**, *Power* actress **Naturi Naughton**,

and #MeToo founder **Tarana Burke**.

The season also featured world-renowned **DJ D-Nice** spinning on the turntable for a high-energy hip hop dance party and Kennedy Center Hip Hop Culture Council members **Black Thought** and **Questlove** led legendary hip hop group, **The Roots**, making their Kennedy Center debut to a sold-out crowd.

DIRECT CURRENT

The Center's two-week celebration of contemporary culture, *DIRECT CURRENT*, returned for a third season with a special emphasis on female creators in honor of the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which granted women's suffrage. This year's immersion, cut short due to COVID-19, featured collaborations with 2020 One Woman, One Vote Festival and Vital Voices Global Partnership, a special

Below: As part of the *DIRECT CURRENT* festival's emphasis on female voices, Millennium Stage presented *Beyoncé Mass* in the Eisenhower Theater.





Above: 2019 Kennedy Center Honoree *Sesame Street*, beloved to generations of children and their parents, is the first television program to receive the prestigious honor.

Below: Comedian Dave Chappelle was saluted by an all-star lineup of comedy's best at the 22nd annual Mark Twain Prize for American Humor.

presentation from **Ava DuVernay**, and **Beyoncé Mass**, a womanist worship service that fosters empowering conversations about Black women.

Millennium Stage

Open to the public and streamed live for its 22nd season, Millennium Stage celebrated the human spirit with free performances by welcoming people and artists of all backgrounds to celebrate our collective cultural heritage in the most inclusive and accessible way possible. This year's highlights featured showcases from Words Beats & Life Hip Hop, The Bentzen Ball Comedy Festival,

and tribute performances to the 2019 Kennedy Center Honorees. The season also included annual fan-favorites *MERRY TUBA CHRISTMAS!*, *Messiah Sing-Along*, and the *Let Freedom Ring!* concert, a celebration honoring the spirit and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The Club at Studio K

The anything-is-possible ethos of the REACH and its dynamic flexible spaces shone through in January through March as Studio K transformed into The Club at Studio K—D.C.'s newest destination to experience the very best in contemporary music and culture. A creative hub and hang space for artists and audience members alike, it showcased celebrated artists such as jazz vocalist **Jazzmeia Horn**, Grammy®-winning singer/songwriter **Bilal**, Kennedy Center Hip Hop Culture Council member and legendary DJ **Bobbito García**, and comedian **Martin Amini**.

Portraits of Courage

For five weeks beginning in October, the newly opened Studio K at the REACH converted into an art gallery and attracted thousands of visitors with a poignant exhibit, *Portraits of*





Courage: A Commander in Chief's Tribute to America's Warriors. This collection of 66 vibrant full-color oil portraits and a four-panel mural painted by **President George W. Bush** was presented on loan from the Ambassador and Mrs. George L Argyros Collection of Presidential Art at the George W. Bush Presidential Center. Intended to close the gap and build understanding between veterans and civilians, the portraits paid tribute to members of the armed forces who served under his command by displaying their images and stories of injury, resilience, determination, and recovery, a narrative which inspired President Bush to honor their sacrifice through art.

Kennedy Center Honors 2019

The 42nd Kennedy Center Honors recognized the profound artistic achievements of R&B collective **Earth, Wind & Fire**, actress **Sally Field**, singer **Linda Ronstadt**, children's television program **Sesame Street**,

and conductor and composer **Michael Tilson Thomas**. The event, hosted by **LL Cool J**, marked the first time ever for a television program (*Sesame Street*) to receive the award. The gala performance, which raised more than \$6 million in support of the Kennedy Center's artistic and educational programs, featured tributes from a star-studded cast and was broadcast to a national audience on CBS.

Mark Twain Prize 2019

In its 22nd year, the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor—the highest accolade in comedy—paid tribute to comedian **Dave Chappelle**. A lineup of comedy legends including **Trevor Noah**, **Jon Stewart**, and **Tiffany Haddish**, and artists **Bradley Cooper** and **John Legend**, joined to celebrate Chappelle's signature humor and career accomplishments at this annual fundraising event. The gala performance was broadcast nationally on PBS and was later available for streaming on Netflix.

Above: Comedian Martin Amini gives the inaugural performance in the Club at Studio K in the REACH.

Looking Ahead to the 50th Anniversary

In 2021, the 50th anniversary of the Center's opening will be a coming together of artists, leaders, and audiences to illuminate our shared American experience and celebrate the power of the arts to transform us. From the wonder of a child at their first performance to the inspiration of an artist in rehearsal, the Center has been nurturing the cultural lives of Americans for decades. For this golden anniversary, exciting new works, compelling programs, and national outreach will build on and enrich the legacy of the Center as a vital cultural institution and the living memorial to President Kennedy. Guided by President Kennedy's ideals, we will reflect on the 50 years behind us and look ahead to where the next 50 may take us.

The Kennedy Center Archives

As the Kennedy Center anticipates its 50th anniversary season, a newly-established Archives project will help audiences discover fresh ways to access the Center's rich history. The launch of a comprehensive Kennedy Center Archives will offer exciting online and in-person opportunities for interaction with artifacts, audio, and media. While efforts are focused on building a historical exhibit set to open in September 2021, the Archives will ensure that the Center's creative and operational records are kept preserved and accessible in perpetuity to any and all who seek to engage with and learn about the Center's rich history as a living memorial to the late President Kennedy.



At right: Kennedy Center Founding Chairman Roger L. Stevens accompanies Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis to a performance of Leonard Bernstein's *MASS*.

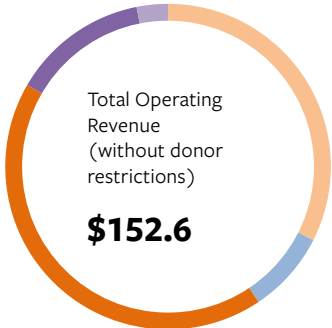
Opposite: President Kennedy's bust watches over the Grand Foyer.



Like most American cultural institutions, the Kennedy Center’s work is funded through a combination of earned income and philanthropic contributions. The generosity of our donors and CARES Act funding was critical this year.

Revenue

Support from our generous donor community is vital to our mission and financial wellbeing. With all performances and programs in the second half of the Center’s season cancelled due to the pandemic, all revenue streams were negatively impacted. In March 2020, Congress passed the CARES Act, an economic stimulus package including \$25 million for the Kennedy Center, of which \$20.6 million was necessary to support staff salaries and benefits. This additional federal funding and the continued generosity of our donors provided a lifeline to the Center in the absence of earned income from ticket sales, rentals, and other sources.



Revenue	(in millions)
Programming and Education	\$49.5
Auxiliary Services and Other (Includes Parking, Gift Shops and Food Concessions)	\$12.5
Contributions, grants and other support (including transfers to board designated fund of \$0.3M)	\$65.3
CARES funding	\$20.6
Endowment Support	\$4.7

Expense

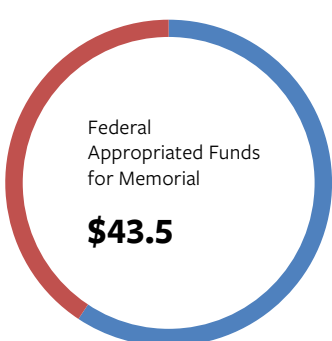
The Kennedy Center’s annual expenses are primarily focused on artistic and educational initiatives. During these difficult times, the Kennedy Center focused efforts on leveraging and growing digital capabilities to stay connected with audiences and to broaden our virtual reach. Operating expenses include staff support and debt service, which represents the funds reserved for the repayment of interest and principal on outstanding debt.



Expense	(in millions)
Programming and Education	\$100.1
Auxiliary Services and Other (Includes Parking, Gift Shops and Food Concessions)	\$3.2
Reserve for Debt Service	\$3.0
General and Administrative and Other	\$46.5

Federal

The Kennedy Center receives an annual federal appropriation in recognition of the Center’s role as the presidential memorial to John F. Kennedy. These funds pay only for the operation and maintenance, and capital repair and restoration of the building and grounds, ensuring that the living memorial to our 35th president remains a vibrant homage to his legacy.



Federal Appropriation	(in millions)
Operations and maintenance	\$25.7
Capital repair and restoration	\$17.8

September 27, 2020

September 29, 2019

Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$40,525,537	\$25,241,709
Accounts receivable, net	498,405	1,650,580
Contributions receivable, net	100,567,756	148,304,463
Marketable securities and other investments	112,710,746	116,702,338
Restricted investments	9,000,000	-
Federal government appropriation held by the U.S. Treasury –		
Operations and maintenance	8,976,176	6,484,331
CARES funding	4,353,072	-
Capital repair and restoration	42,018,127	31,833,666
Property, net of accumulated depreciation	315,233,650	327,330,474
Other assets	1,983,134	3,823,199
Total assets	\$635,866,603	\$661,370,760

Liabilities and net assets**Liabilities:**

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$20,915,291	\$34,571,491
Future performance receipts	11,595,158	28,585,350
Bonds payable	-	19,365,291
Loan payable	81,517,569	59,437,080
Interest rate swap liability	-	4,250,469
Accrued pension cost	10,509,919	9,247,508
Charitable gift annuity liability	2,901,209	2,909,589
Other liabilities	3,456,962	1,345,997
Total liabilities	130,896,108	159,712,775

Net assets (deficit):

Without donor restrictions:		
Operating fund	(25,720,707)	(26,508,642)
<i>Building the Future</i> and Sustainability funds	20,593,636	12,371,290
Board designated fund	10,582,830	9,538,168
WNO Fund for Innovation and Excellence	2,190,432	1,663,705
Appropriation fund	104,397,108	113,771,136
Plant and Bond fund	169,027,797	172,850,093
Total unrestricted	281,071,096	283,685,750
With donor restrictions	223,899,399	217,972,235
Total net assets	504,970,495	501,657,985
Total liabilities and net assets	\$635,866,603	\$661,370,760

To request more information about the Kennedy Center's finances, please contact the Kennedy Center Circles team at (202) 416-8068 or circles@kennedy-center.org.

Our Supporters

*THE GENEROUS PEOPLE
AND PARTNERS WHO MAKE
OUR WORK POSSIBLE*

It is through the generosity of donors, partners, and volunteers from around the world that we are able to serve as the nation's cultural center, live our mission, and endure the most challenging year in our institution's 49-year history. As we reflect on the difficult season behind us, we express heartfelt gratitude to our donors, boards, hard-working staff, and artists, who have exhibited great depths of creativity and resilience in the face of crisis and remained determined to keep the arts very much alive. You can view the full list of boards and donors at the links below.

The Kennedy Center Board of Trustees
The National Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors
Washington National Opera Board of Trustees
The Kennedy Center President's Council
The Kennedy Center International Committee on the Arts
President's Advisory Committee on the Arts
National Committee for the Performing Arts
National Symphony Orchestra National Trustees
The Kennedy Center Circles Board
The Kennedy Center Community Advisory Board
The Kennedy Center Corporate Fund Board
Corporate Donors
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***Building the Future* Campaign Donors**

Mission

As the nation's performing arts center, and a living memorial to President John F. Kennedy, we are a leader for the arts across America and around the world, reaching and connecting with artists, inspiring and educating communities. We welcome all to create, experience, learn about, and engage with the arts.

Vision

We are the nation's beacon for the performing arts, engaging artists and audiences around the world to share, inspire, and celebrate the cultural heritage by which a great society is defined and remembered.

Change from the Inside Out: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Kennedy Center is committed to fostering an empowering staff culture and strengthening an environment of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. With an intention to deepen and amplify existing efforts, the Center conducted an internal reassessment of DEI strategy and activities in 2020. The organization subsequently held several forums and critical training sessions on Allyship as well as enhanced its existing Unconscious Bias training, receiving participation Center-wide at every level of the organization.

The Kennedy Center is refining metrics to better measure DEI initiatives and practices. As we seek to foster an authentically inclusive culture, we prioritize accountability in our assessment and ensure responsive actions to address representation, retention, recruitment practices, and belonging. The Center will soon embark on the creation of a Diversity Council and subsequent establishment of employee resource groups for ongoing diversity, equity and inclusion communication, and support of organizational change efforts.

Values

Respect

Assume good intent and treat our artists, patrons, visitors, and each other the way we would like to be treated: with honesty, dignity, fairness, and openness

Excellence

Excel in all we do through relentless focus on quality, mastery, innovation, and service, using measurements and assessments to drive continuous improvement

Creativity

Infuse our work with exploration and discovery, embracing collaboration, innovation, change, and risk

Inclusiveness

Throughout our organization, foster an environment of equity, inclusion, and diversity for artists, visitors, audiences, supporters, volunteers, and all employees

Transparency

Promote open communications, sharing information as widely as possible and encouraging feedback from all stakeholders

Artistic Integrity

Bring passion every day to our work and stay true to our artistic purpose, honoring the achievements of the past while driving towards the future

Learning

Engage individuals, ourselves, and communities of all ages through accessible arts learning opportunities in order to educate, activate, and celebrate Citizen Artists

Service

Strive to contribute and be of benefit to the public, the artistic community, and the world as we seek to enable artists to change society for the better

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The John F. Kennedy Center
for the Performing Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20566