NEW YORK CITY CENTER
2020 GALA

AN
Evening
with
Audra
McDonald

DECEMBER
2020
NEW YORK CITY CENTER

DECEMBER 2020

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We understand there is a long journey ahead of us before we can once again feel the thrill of a hushed silence fall over 2,200 audience members, all watching expectantly as our signature red curtain rises.

But we’ve already begun.

Our founding mandate was to be here for you, our dedicated audience, now and for centuries to come. In a historic turn, this fall City Center turned the lights back on to present the Fall for Dance Festival and An Evening with Audra McDonald—live from our mainstage, directly into your home.

Your gift will allow us to:
- Transform City Center’s programming into digital virtual offerings
- Expand access to a global arts community
- Deepen our relationships with City Center’s education partners
- Ensure a triumphant return to our mainstage when it is possible to safely reopen our doors

Our journey home starts and ends with you.

MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY

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212.763.1206

OR TEXT
JOURNEYHOME to 443-21
As we come together for this historic 2020 Gala | An Evening with Audra McDonald, I hope you and your loved ones are safe and well this holiday season. It has truly been an unprecedented year.

While we continue to navigate the ever-changing landscape of the pandemic, now more than ever I feel City Center has a unique responsibility to serve the city for which we are named. We are steadfast in our commitment to supporting artists and providing opportunities for them to create and perform, and connecting them with you, our loyal audience.

This summer we launched our digital programming free online with Ayodele Casel’s Diary of a Tap Dancer V.6: Us and our Studio 5 series hosted by Alastair Macaulay featuring Misty Copeland, Sara Mearns, and Tiler Peck. We proudly turned the lights back on at our beloved theater on 55th Street and welcomed artists back to our stage for the digital Fall for Dance Festival in October. Following the latest health and safety protocols, we were able to commission four new works by Kyle Abraham, Dormeshia, Jamar Roberts, and Christopher Wheeldon, and reached an audience that spanned all 50 states and 28 countries. Our Encores! Inside the Revival series, which offers a look inside the creative process for the productions in development, began last month with an episode featuring Billy Porter who is directing and adapting our future Encores! production of The Life. And now, we close out 2020 with the incomparable Audra McDonald making her City Center debut.

None of this would be possible without the amazing artists, crew, and staff working so hard behind the scenes and, of course, the support of our Board of Directors and our audience of friends and supporters at home. As we plan for the future, we intend to uphold our founding mandate to be here for you, our dedicated audience, now—and as Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia predicted at City Center’s opening in 1943—for centuries to come.

Thank you for joining us for the 2020 Gala and for continuing to take this journey with us.

Happy Holidays from all of us.

Arlene Shuler
President and CEO
NEW YORK CITY CENTER

AN EVENING WITH AUDRA MCDONALD

DECEMBER 9, 2020

Audra McDonald

MUSIC DIRECTOR
Andy Einhorn

HOST
Michael Urie

SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY
Jonathan Groff

PRODUCED BY
New York City Center and Nel Shelby Productions

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Jennifer Schriever

SOUND DESIGNER
Scott Lehrer

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Callie Goff

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Production Stage Manager
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ACT I

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Written by Eddie DeLange, Irving Mills and Duke Ellington
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In 1943, Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia and City Council President Newbold Morris established New York City Center, Manhattan’s first performing arts center, as a place where dance, theater, opera, and music could all be enjoyed under one roof—bringing the performing arts to all New Yorkers at affordable prices.

Today, the distinctive neo-Moorish theater welcomes over 300,000 annual visitors to experience dynamic performances, studio events, master classes, and art exhibitions—matched by education and community engagement programs that bring the performing arts to over 11,000 New York City students, teachers, and families each year. City Center remains committed to supporting artists during this crucial time, celebrating the resilience of the arts and its power to bring us together.

The newly formed Joffrey Ballet becomes a resident company—performing regularly for nearly 30 years.

The beloved, Tony-honored Encores! series is established, celebrating the tradition of American musical theater with annual revivals of three classic works featuring original orchestrations. The 1996 production of Chicago transfers to Broadway where it remains the longest-running revival in history.

A $56 million renovation, the most extensive project in the building’s history, restores and modernizes the historic theater.

City Center Live @ Home programming launches online bringing City Center artists directly into our audiences’ homes.

With theaters closed around the world, City Center turns the lights back on to present the Fall for Dance Festival digitally for the first time ever. The online presentation reaches a global audience.

Encores! Off-Center, a series reviving groundbreaking musicals from the more recent past as reimagined by today’s innovative artists, has its first season.

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A landmark 75th Anniversary Season pays tribute to City Center’s rich history while celebrating the institution’s singular role in history and as a home where artists can bring their creative energies to life.

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as of December 4, 2020
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Climb Ev’ry Mountain
Written by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II
Williamson Music Company
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May You Always/Auld Lang Syne
“May You Always” Written by Dick Charles and Lawrence W. Markes
Courtesy of Harley Music
“Auld Lang Syne” Traditional

NEW YORK CITY CENTER
Audra McDonald is unparalleled in the breadth and versatility of her artistry as both a singer and an actor. The winner of a record-breaking six Tony Awards, two Grammy Awards, and an Emmy, in 2015 she was named one of Time magazine’s 100 most influential people and received a National Medal of Arts—America’s highest honor for achievement in the field—from President Barack Obama. In addition to her Tony-winning performances in Carousel, Master Class, Ragtime, A Raisin in the Sun, The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess, and Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar & Grill—the role that also served as the vehicle for her 2017 debut in London’s West End (2018 Olivier Award nomination)—she has appeared on Broadway in The Secret Garden, Marie Christine (Tony nomination), Henry IV, 110 in the Shade (Tony nomination), Shuffle Along, or, The Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed, and Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune (Tony nomination). A Juilliard-trained soprano, her opera credits include La voix humaine and Send at Houston Grand Opera, and Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny at Los Angeles Opera, where the resulting recording earned her two Grammy Awards.

On television, she was seen by millions as the Mother Abbess in NBC’s The Sound of Music Live! and played Dr. Naomi Bennett on ABC’s The Good Wife, and has received nominations for her role as host of PBS’s Live From Lincoln Center and for HBO’s Peabody Award winning documentary “Six by Sondheim” and music supervisor for Great Performances Peabody Award winning special “Broadway Musicals: A Jewish Legacy” on PBS.

Andy Einhorn is an honors graduate of Rice University in Houston, Texas.

Andy Einhorn most recently served as the music supervisor and musical director for the Broadway productions of Hello, Dolly! starring Bette Midler and Carousel starring Renée Fleming. Einhorn’s previous Broadway music directing and conducting credits include Holiday Inn, Woody Allen’s Bullets Over Broadway, Rodgers + Hammerstein’s Cinderella, Brief Encounter, and Sondheim on Sondheim. Other Broadway work includes Evita and The Light in the Piazza.

Since 2011, Einhorn has served as music director and pianist for six-time Tony Award winner, Audra McDonald, performing with her at such prestigious orchestras and venues including The New York Philharmonic, Boston Pops at Tanglewood, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra at Blossom, Cincinnati Pops, Chicago Symphony at Ravinia, Los Angeles Opera, Carnegie Hall, Walt Disney Concert Hall, and more. He has twice led the New York Philharmonic conducting for Audra McDonald and Chris Botti, respectively.

Recording credits include Audra McDonald’s Sing Happy with the New York Philharmonic, Oklahoma! (2019 revival, executive producer, Grammy nomination), Carousel featuring Renée Fleming (executive producer, Grammy nomination), Hello Dolly! featuring Bette Midler (Grammy nomination), Bullets Over Broadway, Cinderella, Evita, Sondheim on Sondheim (Grammy nomination), Stage Door Canteen, and McDonald’s “Go Back Home.” He served as the music director for Broadway Musicals: A Jewish Legacy.”
NEW YORK CITY CENTER

MEET THE ARTISTS

NEW YORK CITY CENTER has played a defining role in the cultural life of the city since 1943 when it was founded by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia with the mission to make the best in the performing arts accessible to all. The distinctive neo-Moorish theater welcomes 300,000 visitors annually to experience internationally acclaimed artists on the same stage where legends like George Balanchine, Leonard Bernstein, Barbara Cook, José Ferrer, Martha Graham, and Paul Robeson made their mark. For over 25 years, the treasured, Tony-honored Encores! series has given new life to the American musical theater canon, complemented in recent years by the Encores! Off-Center series, which brings today’s innovative artists into contact with groundbreaking musicals from the more recent past.

Dance continues to be an integral part of the institution’s mission through programs like the annual Fall for Dance Festival, which exposes new audiences to an international array of artists by offering subsidized tickets. Through its robust education and community programs, City Center brings the performing arts to over 11,000 New York City students, teachers, and families each year and activates all areas of the building with talks, master classes, art exhibitions, and intimate performances that provide audiences an up-close look at the work of the great theater and dance artists of our time.

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An Evening with Audra McDonald

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Internationally acclaimed tap artist Ayodele Casel and frequent collaborator Torya Beard conceived and curated this City Center-commissioned video series to bring you a mesmerizing mix of rhythm and movement and share the stories that shape the artistry of a multigenerational and multicultural group of tap trailblazers from around the world.

AYODELE CASEL’S DIARY OF A TAP DANCER V.6: US

Internationally acclaimed tap artist Ayodele Casel and frequent collaborator Torya Beard conceived and curated this City Center-commissioned video series to bring you a mesmerizing mix of rhythm and movement and share the stories that shape the artistry of a multigenerational and multicultural group of tap trailblazers from around the world.

What’s Online at City Center

Watch Now for Free

NYCITYCENTER.ORG

Encores! Inside the Revival

Go behind the scenes with this new digital series that takes you inside the next chapter of the beloved Tony-honored Encores! where the unique creative process of musical theater productions in development is led by Encores! Artistic Director Lear deBessonet and newly announced Producing Creative Director Clint Ramos. Enjoy live performances and hear one-on-one conversations with directors and artists invested in bringing these productions to you as soon as it is safe to do so.

In the first episode, Emmy and Tony Award-winning artist Billy Porter takes audiences through his reimagining of the 1997 Tony-nominated musical The Life—punctuated with performances by recording artist and Encores! Off-Center alum Mykal Kilgore and Grammy-nominated artist Ledisi.

A Letter from Arlene Shuler

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Upcoming Events

Share the magic of music this holiday season.

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