



EnsembleArts

**GREAT STAGES GALA
Honoring Marian Anderson
June 8, 2024**

**Queen Latifah to Host Concert,
the First to Take Place in Marian Anderson Hall,
Home of The Philadelphia Orchestra**

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin and The Philadelphia Orchestra
to Perform with Angel Blue, Audra McDonald,
Latonia Moore, and Marcus Roberts**

*Concert will include orchestration of Florence Price's arrangement of
"My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord," sung by Marian Anderson
at historic Lincoln Memorial performance on April 9, 1939*

(Philadelphia, April 9, 2024)—Today, on the 85th anniversary of Marian Anderson's historic 1939 Lincoln Memorial performance, The Philadelphia Orchestra announces that GRAMMY®, Emmy®, and Golden Globe® award-winning and Academy Award®-nominated artist, actor, and producer **Queen Latifah** will host the **Great Stages Gala Concert honoring Marian Anderson** on **Saturday, June 8, 2024, at 8 PM**. Following a rededication ceremony that afternoon during which Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts will officially become [Marian Anderson Hall](#), home of The Philadelphia Orchestra, the concert will be the first to take place in the newly named hall—the first major concert venue in the world to honor the late contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The evening will feature performances by Music and Artistic Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** and **The Philadelphia Orchestra** with soprano **Angel Blue**, actress and singer **Audra McDonald**, soprano **Latonia Moore**, and jazz pianist **Marcus Roberts**.

The musical selections of the concert are all connected to Marian Anderson, including "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" and a special orchestration of Florence Price's arrangement of the spiritual "My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord," both sung by Anderson during the concert on April 9, 1939, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial after she was denied the opportunity to sing at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC,

because of her race. Tickets to the Great Stages Gala Concert portion of the evening are available at ensembleartsphilly.org and philorch.org.

“I know it will be a moving and meaningful experience to perform for the first time on the stage of Marian Anderson Hall with The Philadelphia Orchestra,” said Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin. “To have exceptional artists like Queen Latifah, Angel Blue, Audra McDonald, Latonia Moore and Marcus Roberts—themselves trailblazers in their fields—join us for this momentous occasion will make the evening even more special, as we continue to create a more representative art form. We hope that every person feels welcome in our music and in the concert hall, and that every performance in Marian Anderson Hall serves as a reminder of her legacy and as an inspiration.”

“As we commemorate the 85th anniversary of Marian Anderson’s powerful and historic performance at the Lincoln Memorial, we look forward to celebrating and honoring Ms. Anderson’s life and legacy with the Great Stages Gala on June 8,” said President and CEO Matías Tarnopolsky. “As we officially open the doors and welcome guests into Marian Anderson Hall, all will inhabit a living memorial to an exceptional Black American artist, one of the greatest voices of the 20th century. In doing so, we will make very visible and very real our commitment to the ideals by which she lived her life: equity, justice, freedom, and the belief that the arts are for everyone.”

The Great Stages Gala will begin with a black-tie donor reception on the Academy of Music stage at 6 PM prior to the 8 PM concert in Marian Anderson Hall at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, followed by a donor after-party at the Kimmel Center. Great Stages Gala donor packages can be purchased [here](#). Proceeds from the Great Stages Gala benefit the restoration of the Academy of Music, along with the programs, people, and venues of The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts, including Marian Anderson Hall.

About Marian Anderson

Born in Philadelphia on February 27, 1897, Marian Anderson was an acclaimed contralto who performed a wide range of music, from opera to spirituals, with renowned orchestras in major concert and recital venues around the world between 1925 and 1965. Over 20 years, between 1937 and 1957, she sang 12 times with The Philadelphia Orchestra. After her retirement from singing in 1965, she joined the Orchestra to narrate Aaron Copland’s *A Lincoln Portrait* several times at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in Saratoga Springs, New York, and at the Robin Hood Dell in Philadelphia, the last time in 1976, with the composer conducting. An important figure in the struggle for Black artists to overcome racial prejudice, Anderson was denied the opportunity to sing at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC, in 1939. She then performed a historic open-air concert on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1939, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, singing before a crowd of more than 75,000 people and a radio audience in the millions. On

January 7, 1955, she became the first Black singer to perform a lead role at the Metropolitan Opera. She served as a delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Committee and as a Goodwill Ambassador for the United States Department of State, giving concerts around the world. Anderson received the first Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963, the Congressional Gold Medal in 1977, the Kennedy Center Honors in 1978, the National Medal of Arts in 1986, and a GRAMMY® Lifetime Achievement Award in 1991.

About Marian Anderson Hall

Marian Anderson Hall, home of The Philadelphia Orchestra, is the first major concert venue in the world named in honor of the legendary contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The hall is a permanent monument to its namesake's artistry and achievements, a reflection of the inclusive future she helped to engender, and an active testament to the intersection of music, art, and positive social impact.

The dedication of Marian Anderson Hall is named in her honor by a visionary \$25 million philanthropic gift from Richard Worley and Leslie Miller. Worley has been a member of The Philadelphia Orchestra's Board of Trustees since 1997 and served as chair from 2009–2019. Miller is a former Kimmel Center trustee and previous acting president of the Kimmel Center. With this commitment, they are among the largest donors in Philadelphia Orchestra history. Additional generous support for Marian Anderson Hall was given by Sidney and Caroline Kimmel.

In addition to The Philadelphia Orchestra, also appearing in Marian Anderson Hall will be Resident Companies, Ensemble Arts Philly presentations, and performing arts groups from around the world.

A complete media kit about Marian Anderson Hall can be found [here](#).

About Queen Latifah

Queen Latifah is a GRAMMY and Emmy Award–winning and Oscar-nominated musician, actress, producer, label president, author, and entrepreneur. Her previous film credits include *Jungle Fever*, *Set It Off*, *Chicago*, *Bringing Down the House*, *The Last Holiday*, *Beauty Shop*, *Life Support*, *Bessie*, *Girls Trip*, and *End of the Road*. Her television credits include *Living Single* and *Star*. Latifah starred in the live television adaptations of *The Wiz Live!* for NBC and *The Little Mermaid Live!* for ABC. She has earned six GRAMMY Award nominations, as well as a GRAMMY Award for Best Solo Rap Performance in 1994. In 2004, she was nominated for Best Female Rap Solo Performance for “Go Head.” In 2005, she was nominated for Best Jazz Vocal Album for *The Dana Owens Album*, and in 2008, she was nominated for Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album for *Trav'lin Light*. Latifah can currently be seen in the hit CBS series *The Equalizer*, of which she is also an executive producer.

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