

# McCarter

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**MCCARTER THEATRE COMPANY CELEBRATES THE INAUGURAL SEASON OF  
DIRECTOR OF PRESENTED PROGRAMMING BY PAULA ABREU,  
STARTING WITH PERFORMANCE BY ICONIC SINGER, SONGWRITER,  
VISUAL ARTIST AND AUTHOR PATTI SMITH  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2023**

*Patti Smith: Words and Music kicks-off a fall season  
of global headliners reflecting the taste and vision of Abreu including:  
Malian Singer, Songwriter, And Global Music Superstar **Fatoumata Diawara**;  
Pakistani-American singer and GRAMMY winner **Arooj Aftab**,  
appearing with pianist **Vijay Iyer** and **Shahzad Ismaily**;  
Soul Singer **Madison McFerrin**;  
And A Live-To-Film Stage Version Of The Disney/Pixar's Animated Film **Coco**  
Featuring The **Orquesta Folclórica Nacional De México***

**PRINCETON, NJ (September 5, 2023)** – McCarter Theatre Center will celebrate the debut season for McCarter’s new Director of Presented Programming, **Paula Abreu** starting with a special performance featuring songs and stories from the remarkable life of singer, songwriter, visual artist and author **Patti Smith** on Saturday, September 23. Smith, who has roots in New Jersey, will tailor her performance to this special celebratory event for McCarter. The evening will kick-off a stellar season lineup that includes a full roster of performances by some of the world’s greatest talents across music, dance and spoken word.

The diversity of events and artists programmed for the 2023-24 season reflects the taste and vision of McCarter's Director of Presented Programming, **Paula Abreu** who joined the nationally-known performing arts center in late 2022, as successor to the 60-year tenure of retired McCarter programmer Bill Lockwood. Abreu brings a fresh perspective and more than a decade of experience to the role having curated festivals and presented artists with multiple major non-profit NYC institutions, including SummerStage, the Charlie Parker Jazz Festival, Lincoln Center, and the Red Hot Organization.

"I'm very proud of the season we have planned," says Abreu. "I hope people will want to come and discover new talent and new ways of seeing the world through these performances. For me, it's all about imagination and discovery."

Abreu -- who was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and lived in Africa for a period of time before moving to the United States -- approaches her work with a global lens. "Our 23-24 roster of events is a testament to McCarter's commitment to attracting great artistic talent. McCarter's Presented Events and theatrical productions intentionally complement each other to provide our patrons with programming that sparks conversation and embraces different perspectives."

As for the criteria shaping her first season at McCarter, "It isn't about being everything for everyone," she says. "But I do want to pay attention to the communities around us who can be better served. I want them to come, feel welcome, and represented."

And while the languages, genres, and performing styles might differ, there is an underlying thread to the choices of artists such as **Smith, Fatoumata Diawara** (September 30), and Pakistani-American singer and GRAMMY winner **Arooj Aftab**, appearing with pianist **Vijay Iyer** and **Shahzad Ismaily**, on October 5, that goes beyond artistic excellence. "When picking artists, I pay attention to their stories, their messaging, and what they're trying to do. Sometimes, their artistic existence is a form of resistance. I am interested in creative activists," says Abreu.

"Paula's leadership and vision has resulted in a stunning lineup of events beyond theatrical productions that will captivate our audiences and leave them eager to attend our next performance," said **Sarah Rassmussen, Artistic Director** of McCarter Theatre Center. "I love the way she is weaving together artists that McCarter audiences have come to love in addition to fostering so many McCarter debuts for incredible talents."

Sharing the spotlight of the organization's produced plays and musicals, McCarter's Presented series has been celebrated for offering an innovative mix of over 40 events each season - a slate of world class headliners and cultural performances across music, dance, spoken word, comedy and family programming, establishing McCarter as one of the country's leading cultural destinations with performers and audiences alike.

McCarter's fall 2023 presented series includes appearances by Van Cliburn International Piano Competition winner and prodigy sensation **Yunchan Lim** on September 21; **David Sedaris**, one of America's preeminent humor writers, on October 6, genre-crossing "little orchestra" **Pink Martini** on November 3; operatic bass-baritone **Davóne Tines** on November 16, and two new holiday shows: the comedy **The Ultimate Christmas Show** on December 14, and the family event **Choir! Choir! Choir!** on December 16.

The Fall program also includes a not-to-be missed opportunity for classical music enthusiasts to hear *Bach's Mass in B Minor* performed with the **Monteverdi Choir** and **English Baroque Soloists** on October 23.

"For our classical lineup, I followed Bill Lockwood's recommendations," she says. "I learned a lot from my predecessor and am excited to keep some legacy artists and genres that have worked well for McCarter. That is also part of my vision."

Other highlights of the season include the 20-piece **Orquesta Folclórica Nacional de México** performing live while screening the animated film **Disney/Pixar's Coco** on October 4 and the debut at McCarter of new generation soul singer **Madison McFerrin** on October 14.

Regarding *Coco*, Abreu notes, "I'm thrilled not only because I've been wanting to bring Mexican artists to McCarter, but am also delighted that this is a family program that can be enjoyed by multiple generations attending the concert together."

About Madison McFerrin, Abreu notes: "I'm always excited to introduce someone like Madison, a fierce and talented up-and-coming artist. And there is a bit of history here too. Her father, Bobby McFerrin, has performed at McCarter, so it's great to welcome her to our venue. Their music and styles are different, but the artistry has been passed down by the generations. Her grandfather was an opera singer."

Meanwhile, for yet another change of pace, **Alan Cumming**, best known for *Cabaret*, and *The Good Wife*, and radio journalist **Ari Shapiro** of NPR's *All Things Considered* fame, join forces for *Oy: A Considered Cabaret*, an evening of tunes and tales, on November 18.

**McCarter in PARTNERSHIP**

The fall lineup is enriched by creative collaborations with Princeton University and community partners under McCarter's **Arts & Ideas\*** program. Two events are in association with the Department of Music and Timbuktu Grooves: The Princeton African Music Festival. First, *Once the Dust Settles, Flowers Bloom*, will be the premiere of this work by **Olivier Tarpaga Dance Project** on September 29. This event is enhanced by a pre-show conversation with creator Tarpaga and Princeton Professor Nicole Myers Turner from the Department of Religion, and the audience is invited to an Afrobeats after-party with drinks, live DJ and dancing. And on September 30, Award-winning **Malian singer-songwriter Fatoumata Diawara** brings a soulful blend of desert blues out of her electric guitar to McCarter's mainstage.

A partnership with local partners Labyrinth Bookstore and the Princeton Public Library brings Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Jhumpa Lahiri** to McCarter for a conversation with Princeton Professor Zahid Chaudhary on November 2. Meanwhile, *The Sound of [Black] Music*, an Afrofuturistic reimagining of the classic *The Sound of Music*, premiering at McCarter on November 17, will be explored in a free "Ancestral Communal Listening" workshop November 13 at the local Arts Council of Princeton, led by Michael Mwenso, the show's co-creator with co-director Shariffa Ali from Princeton's Lewis Center for the Arts.

*\*Arts & Ideas connects Princeton University scholarship and community partners to the work on McCarter's stage and behind the scenes, and is co-sponsored by the Princeton University Humanities Council.*

Visit [www.mccarter.org](http://www.mccarter.org) for the full schedule of events and information including Student Ticketing options. Please note: all events are subject to time changes and cancellations.

For Groups of 10 or more contact: [groups@mccarter.org](mailto:groups@mccarter.org). For Subscription and Ticketing questions, contact [patronservices@mccarter.org](mailto:patronservices@mccarter.org) or call Patron Services at 609-258-2787, Tues-Sat 12-6pm.

## 2023-2024 PRESENTED EVENTS BY GENRE

### Dance

#### **Olivier Tarpaga Dance Project | September 29, 2023**

Presented in Association with Timbuktu Grooves: The Princeton African Music Festival, Olivier Tarpaga's "feminist Africanist" work *Once the Dust Settles, Flowers Bloom* gives voice and body to the refugees of the Sahel region, channeling their strength and beauty.

#### **Mark Morris Dance Group | January 27, 2024**

The country's preeminent modern dance company brings an exciting program of recent works and audience favorites to the McCarter Theater.

#### **Ayodele Casel: Chasing Magic | February 8, 2024**

The latest work from one of the world's great tap dance talents, a celebratory display of artistic encounters and how to reconnect with them.

#### **Hubbard Street Dance Chicago | March 28, 2024**

One of Chicago's premier dance companies returns to McCarter with a multi-faceted program celebrating its 45th season.

#### **Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo | April 17, 2024**

The "World's Foremost All-Male Comic Ballet Company" celebrates 50 years of leaps and laughs, in drag and en pointe.

### Classical Music

#### **Yunchan Lim | September 21, 2023**

McCarter Debut Artist and 2022 Cliburn Gold Medalist International Piano Competition winner, Yunchan Lim, a precocious teen with prodigious talent marries technical brilliance with youthful emotion in this classical piano performance.

**Bach: Mass in B Minor**

**Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists | October 23, 2023**

A choir founded to honor the color of Italian music follows its performance at King Charles III's coronation with a rendition of one of Bach's final masterworks.

**Davóne Tines | November 16, 2023**

An avant-garde bass-baritone singer that defies convention of what it means to be "classical."

**National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine | February 11, 2024**

A storied symphony returns to McCarter to perform a rich program showcasing some of Ukraine's most talented and renowned musicians.

**Voice and the Violin | May 28, 2024**

GRAMMY Award-winning violinist **Joshua Bell** and acclaimed soprano **Larisa Martinez**, alongside renowned pianist **Peter Dugan**, present Voice and the Violin, an intimate evening of romantic arias and modern classics.

**Music**

**Patti Smith: Words and Music | September 23, 2023**

The multi-hyphenate shares spoken-word stories from her life interspersed with songs with the help of her children.

**Fatoumata Diawara | September 30, 2023**

Presented in Association with Timbuktu Grooves: The Princeton African Music Festival, Award-winning Malian singer-songwriter Fatoumata Diawara brings a soulful blend of desert blues music out of her electric guitar.

**Arooj Aftab, Vijay Iyer, Shahzad Ismaily: Love in Exile | October 5, 2023**

A trio formed around an improvisational jazz icon, a polymath multi-instrumentalist, and a Grammy-winning vocalist with an ethereal voice performs their new work.

**Madison McFerrin | October 14, 2023**

The latest generation of a storied musical legacy brings dulcet tones and impeccable vibes to McCarter.

**Pink Martini | November 3, 2023**

Pink Martini presents a rollicking around-the-world musical adventure that brings people together with sultry sambas, silky Parisian ballads, and an all-around swingin' good time.

**The Sound of (Black) Music | November 17, 2023**

An Afrofuturist takes on a Rodgers & Hammerstein classic, with an electrifying group of more than 20 musicians and vocalists paying tribute to the rich, communal history of Black roots music.

**Blue Note Records 85th Anniversary Celebration**

**Starring The Blue Note Quintet | January 25, 2024**

Led by six-time Grammy Award nominee, Gerald Clayton, The Blue Note Quintet honors the iconic label's rich history and showcases its current roster of eclectic musicians. Rounding out the group is vibraphonist Joel Ross, saxophonist Immanuel Wilkins, drummer Kendrick Scott, and bassist Matt Brewer.

**Kaki King | January 26, 2024**

A virtuoso known for pushing the limits of the guitar, Kaki King presents a new guitar-driven, technicolor projection mapping show, in tandem with a cutting-edge approach to storytelling and musical performance.

**CelloGayageum | February 2, 2024**

Formed in 2016, Austrian cellist Sol Daniel Kim and Korean gayageum player Dayoung Yoon created a musical phenomenon bridging cultural divides through the universal language of music.

**American Patchwork Quartet | February 9, 2024**

Featuring Falu Shah (vocal), Clay Ross (vocal/guitar), Clarence Penn (drums) and Yasushi Nakamura (bass). A decorated quartet of American acclaimed musicians from different backgrounds recontextualizes the folk canon.

**The Legendary Ingramettes | February 16, 2024**

NEA Heritage Fellows Award winning First Family of Gospel. Richmond, Virginia's "First Family of Gospel" carries on their mother's musical legacy with a performance of their first new work since her passing.

**Jeremy Dutcher | March 16, 2024**

A Two-Spirit song carrier, composer, and activist, Jeremy Dutcher invites audiences to be transformed by music that pushes the boundaries of his unique sonic landscape.

**Zakir Hussain, Sabir Khan, and Debopriya Chatterjee | April 12, 2024**

A classical tabla virtuoso of the highest order performs with a Sufi-inspired sarangi master and one of the illustrious "Flute Sisters".

**Trailblazing Women of Country - - A Tribute to Patsy, Loretta, and Dolly | April 14, 2024**

An all-woman ensemble performs works from three titans of country music that forever shaped the genre's voice, tone, and point of view. Featuring soloists **Miko Marks** and Nashville based singer **Kristina Train**.

**Speaker, Comedy, and Cabaret****David Sedaris | October 6, 2023**

The writer, humorist, and master of satire returns to McCarter for an evening of readings and recollections, Q&A, and book signing.

**Jhumpa Lahiri | November 2, 2023**

Presented in Collaboration with Labyrinth Books and the Princeton Public Library

The renowned bilingual writer, translator, and literary critic, who writes fiction as well as non-fiction both in English and Italian, discusses her new collection of short-stories, her life's work, and the power of translation.

**Alan Cumming & Ari Shapiro | November 18, 2023**

Two famous storytellers perform their tongue-in-cheek two-man cabaret with a flair both bawdy and risqué.

**The Ultimate Christmas Show (abridged) | December 14, 2023**

Reduced Shakespeare Company presents an irreverent and hilarious holiday comedy revue that turns your Christmas traditions on their head.

**Family****Disney Pixar's Coco in Concert | October 4, 2023**

Projected on a big screen and accompanied by the 20-member **Orquesta Folclórica Nacional de México**, experience the Oscar®-winning Disney Pixar classic like never before.

**Choir! Choir! Choir! Holiday Show | December 16, 2023**

A rousing holiday choral experience that promises to draw the audience into the performance.

**The Laurie Berkner Band – The Greatest Hits Concert | January 20, 2024**

The "kindie rock" pioneer brings her band to perform family-friendly songs brimming with child-like wonder that parents won't mind hearing on repeat.

***The Very Hungry Caterpillar* | March 17, 2024**

Dozens of characters from Eric Carle's classic children's stories—including the titular ravenous caterpillar—come to life on stage through the magic of puppetry.

**STOMP | June 7 – June 8, 2024**

Eight dancers wield brooms, garbage cans, and even the kitchen sink in an electric performance that has become a worldwide phenomenon.

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**About McCarter Theatre Center**

An independent not-for-profit performing arts center located between New York City and Philadelphia on the campus of Princeton University, McCarter is a multi-disciplinary creative and intellectual hub offering theater, music, dance, family programs, spoken word, and educational programs for all ages that inspires conversations, connections and collaborations in our communities. McCarter leads with the values of **justice** and **joy**, and seeks **beauty** in **belonging**. Celebrated for developing new work and winner of the 1994 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, world premieres include Christopher *Durang's Vanya*, *Sonia*, *Masha and Spike* (Tony Award winner, Best Play), Tarell Alvin McCraney's *The Brother/Sister Plays*, Emily Mann's *Having Our Say*. McCarter's presented series has featured hundreds of renowned artists including Alvin Ailey, Yo-Yo Ma, Audra McDonald, David Sedaris, The Moth, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Roseanne Cash, Lake Street Dive, Samara Joy, and many more. McCarter and Princeton University share a successful history of unique partnerships and creative collaborations. **To learn about McCarter's history, the 23/24 season, community and education programs, visit [www.mccarter.org](http://www.mccarter.org).**