

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Note: Photos available at <http://mccallumtheatre.com/index.php/media>

**A Celebration of Ella Fitzgerald
Starring Patti Austin, Kurt Elling,
Monica Mancini, Wé McDonald and Ledisi
McCallum Theatre
Saturday – February 29 – 8:00pm**

Palm Desert, CA – Direct from the Apollo Theater, *A Celebration of Ella Fitzgerald* will bring singing greats Patti Austin, Kurt Elling, Monica Mancini, Wé McDonald and Ledisi to the McCallum Theatre for a fantastic night of music by one of the most revered vocalists of our time, at 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 29.

Each performer embodies a different era of the jazz legend’s life, intertwined with stories from her debut as a teenager at New York’s Apollo Theater to the peak of her fame. The music highlights Ella’s greatest hits, including “A Tisket a Tasket,” “Blues in the Night,” “Miss Otis Regrets,” “You’ll Have to Swing It” and more. The show features the Ella All-Star Band with Shelly Berg, Nathan East, Brian Nova and Gregg Field.

Patti Austin’s keen interest in being a total entertainer likely started when she stepped onto the stage of the world-famous Apollo Theater in Harlem at the age of 4, at the urging of music legend Dinah Washington. The daughter of jazz trombonist Gordon Austin, Patti achieved her first chart success in 1969 with “The Family Tree” (a Top 50 R&B single). During the ’70s, Patti was the undisputed “Queen” of the New York session scene. Her voice was heard behind everyone from Paul Simon, Cat Stevens, James Brown and Joe Cocker to Bette Midler, Roberta Flack, Luther Vandross and Diana Ross. Austin’s upcoming 2020 album, *Let’s Do It*, will surely garner serious Grammy consideration. Now after more than two decades of touring, Patti is launching the *Patti Austin Podcast*, to celebrate the power of music to unite us.

Kurt Elling is renowned for his singular combination of robust swing and poetic insight. A Grammy winner, Elling is among the world’s foremost jazz vocalists. Elling’s most recent release, *The Questions*, vividly exemplifies his ability to respond to the world around him with both urgent immediacy and a unique perspective. Co-produced by acclaimed saxophonist Branford Marsalis, the album searches for answers to the culture’s most divisive social, political and spiritual issues via the songs of Bob Dylan, Carla Bley and Leonard Bernstein, and the poetry of Rumi and Wallace Stevens. Elling has not only thrilled audiences around the world in jazz clubs, symphony halls and festival stages, but at the White House, where he gave a command performance for President Obama’s first state dinner. He has created multi-disciplinary theatrical works for the Steppenwolf Theatre and the city of Chicago, and served as artist-in-residence for the Singapore and Monterey Jazz Festivals.

Ledisi is a 12-time Grammy-nominated vocal powerhouse who has wowed fans ever since she came onto the San Francisco Bay Area music scene. Over the past 20 years, she has earned a place as one of the best jazz and soul singers of her generation. Ledisi is a favorite of the Obamas and performed nine times at the White House. Her fans include icons, legends and current chart-toppers like the late-Prince, Patti LaBelle, Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder and so many others. She has performed alongside Richie Sambora, Dave Matthews, Kelly Clarkson, Jill Scott, Maxwell, Herbie Hancock and the Count Basie Orchestra. Most recently she recorded on a project duetting with the late Miles Davis. Ledisi is not only a singer and actress; she's an author, playwright, film producer and CEO of her own record label, Chinweya Entertainment.

Monica Mancini is a double-Grammy-nominated Concord Records recording artist. The daughter of famed film composer Henry Mancini, Monica has carved out an impressive career as a concert performer, appearing with major symphony orchestras worldwide, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, New York Pops, Boston Pops and the London Metropolitan Orchestra. Her debut CD, simply titled *Monica Mancini*, was the companion to her PBS television special, *Monica Mancini: On Record*. Monica's fifth album, *I've Loved These Days*, is a collection of classic singer-songwriter songs featuring collaborations with Stevie Wonder, Brian Wilson, Jackson Browne and Take 6—arranged for full orchestra. Monica recently made her debut at the famed Apollo Theater in New York as part of their Ella Fitzgerald 100th birthday celebration.

Wé McDonald's show-stopping blind audition on the hit NBC TV show *The Voice* drew national attention in 2016. It was the kind of momentous debut she had been preparing for her entire life. Singing since the age of 12, Wé attended the Harlem School for the Arts after school and on weekends, where she studied theater and piano while further cultivating her unique and righteously robust voice. In 2017, McDonald appeared on the Emmy Award-winning PBS broadcast of the Gershwin Awards honoring Tony Bennett. In 2018, she sang the National Anthem at Yankee Stadium. Available now is her latest single "If I Didn't Love You," and she is working on a self-titled EP with a diverse slate of songs written by McDonald that showcases her soaring vocal presence.

Tickets for this performance are priced at \$100, \$80 and \$60. Tickets are available at the Theatre's website at www.mccallumtheatre.com or by calling the McCallum Theatre Box Office at (760) 340-2787. The McCallum Theatre, located at 73000 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert CA 92260, accepts payment by cash, personal check, VISA, MasterCard, Discover and American Express.

*The McCallum Theatre Box Office, its phone center and website, are the **only** authorized outlets for tickets to performances presented at the Theatre. Tickets purchased from any other sources, such as brokers or secondary market websites, are purchased at consumer's own risk and cannot be guaranteed as valid.*

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