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For Immediate Release

The Center for Performing Arts' 2019-2020 Season Celebrates GSU's 50th Anniversary

University Park, IL (July 11, 2019) – The Center for Performing Arts (CPA) is celebrating Governors State University's (GSU's) 50th anniversary with one of its most diverse and thrilling seasons yet. From classic rock by Jefferson Starship, to beloved jazz standards from the Chicago Jazz Philharmonic, to the gravity-defying artistry of Viva Momix acrobats, this season has something for everyone.

"I am excited to share this season with our community," says CPA Executive Director Lana Rogachevskaya, "Yes, it's a celebration of GSU's 50 incredible years. Yes, it's a lineup of powerful sounds and compassionate stories. Above all, it's our invitation to connect - to join a community of local and international artists, friends, alumni, coworkers, and neighbors and immerse yourself in collective and personal experiences of live arts. Art reminds us what it is to be human."

Rogachevskaya adds, "This season's cross-generational appeal is no accident. We've expanded our children's discounted tickets to make performances more easily accessible to families."

Whether it's the holiday magic of *The Nutcracker*, the GSU Dance Company's tribute to female artists in *From Tina to Beyoncé: Celebrating 50 Years of Female Empowerment*, or the critically acclaimed gospel musical *Crowns* by Regina Taylor, this season will appeal to every generation—from the Greatest to Z.

The 2019–20 season opens with *Opera Up Close: All Stars*, celebrating 10 years of CPA's *Opera Up Close* series. Conceived by Lyric Opera tenor John Concepcion, *Opera Up Close* brings Chicago's best vocalists to the southland for a sampling of opera highlights. Usually performed for an intimate audience of 150 seated onstage, this year's 10-Year Celebration, *Opera All Stars* on September 22 will expand its capacity to 350 fortunate audience members. This all-star event includes a pre-show lobby experience (free to ticket-holders), a mainstage performance, and an add-on ticket to a post-show Encore Reception with the artists.

Following the success of April's sold-out *Ultimate Queen Celebration Starring Marc Martel* and pre-show party, the CPA will celebrate GSU's homecoming weekend and 50 Years of Rock on October 19 with another pre-show celebration prior to a concert by the legendary rock band Jefferson Starship.

In November, Chicago's MPAACT Theatre returns with *Crowns: A Gospel Musical* by Regina Taylor. GSU alumnus and Goodman Theater Artistic Director Chuck Smith will direct this joyous production. Integrating jazz, hip-hop, R&B, and rap, but primarily gospel, *Crowns* explores Black female identity from individual and collective perspectives, while bridging generational divides. A pre-show panel "Breaking Down the Myth of the Millennial," will further explore cross-generational bridges and divides.

For Valentine's Day weekend, internationally acclaimed singer Belinda Davids pays tribute to the legacy of Whitney Houston with *The Greatest Love of All*. Producer and director Johnny Van Grinsven promises, "People who haven't seen Belinda before are always shocked to hear her voice...they can't get enough of it and that's why we're coming back to the U.S. so soon—pure demand."

July 19, 2019 marks Governors State University's 50th anniversary. Originally conceived as a bold, new model—a university without walls—GSU has transformed countless lives through education. Today, GSU continues its mission of serving as an intellectually stimulating public square with the Center for Performing Arts (CPA) playing a crucial role; providing dynamic entertainment and educational experiences for all, serving over 50,000 patrons annually.

The Center for Performing Arts thanks our generous partners, funders, and individual contributors including The National Endowment for the Arts, Arts Midwest, First Midwest Bank, and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

Tickets go on sale to flex buyers (patrons who purchased tickets to three or more shows) on July 17.

Single tickets for 2019–20 shows go on sale August 1.

For more information, ticket prices, and preview videos, visit CenterTickets.net

Center for Performing Arts 2019–2020 Season Lineup

September 2019

6–8

Chicago Southland International Film Festival

A three-day festival featuring international, emerging, and professional independent filmmakers' works, followed by Q&A with the directors.

22

Opening Night: *Opera Up Close All Stars*

Ten vocalists perform selections from the last ten years of the *Opera Up Close* series. A pre-show lobby experience is free to all ticket holders. Post-show Encore Reception is available at an additional cost.

October 2019

6

United States Air Force Band of Mid-America (FREE CONCERT)

This 45-piece ensemble's repertoire ranges from symphonic band masterworks, to traditional marches, to modern compositions, to pop and jazz.

19 **Jefferson Starship: 50 Years of Rock Homecoming Weekend**
Featuring original and historical members David Freiberg and drummer Donny Baldwin, and GRAMMY-nominee Cathy Richardson anchoring the female lead vocal spot made famous by the inimitable Grace Slick. The music that defined a generation and spanned decades is more relevant than ever in pop-culture as hits such as “Somebody to Love”, “White Rabbit”, and “Jane”.

November 2019

1–3 ***The Laramie Project* presented by GSU Theatre and Performance Studies (TAPS)**
A breathtaking collage that explores the depths to which humanity can sink and the heights of compassion to which humanity can soar. This drama addresses the brutal murder of openly gay college student Matthew Shepard in the small town of Laramie, Wyoming—an incident that sparked national debate back in 1998.

10 ***Jungle Book***
Featuring eye-popping video, shadow puppetry, interactive technology and the whimsical and soulful stories, poems, and songs from the original Kipling novel.

16–17 ***Crowns: The Gospel Musical***
This moving and celebratory musical explores black history and identity through 17-year-old Yolanda’s eyes. Rap, hip-hop, spoken word, jazz, blues, R&B, but predominantly gospel music and dance underscore this joyous and inspiring story.

December 2019

7 **Salt Creek Ballet’s *The Nutcracker***
Salt Creek Ballet’s enchanting production returns. Featuring Tchaikovsky’s enchanting score, festive sets and costumes, waltzing flowers, giant mice, and the Sugar Plum Fairy.

January 2020

25 **Winter Comedy Festival**
Featuring some of the Midwest’s hottest rising stand-up comedians: Prince T-Dub, Levi Dha Komedian, and J Bell.

February 2020

8 ***The Greatest Love of All: A Tribute to Whitney Houston starring Belinda Davids***

Chart-topping artist Belinda Davids brings Whitney Houston's musical legacy to life. Accompanied by a live band, backing vocalists and dancers, and featuring state-of-the-art sound, lighting, visuals, and theatrical effects, this two-hour production features Houston's greatest hits "I Will Always Love You", "I Wanna Dance with Somebody", "How Will I Know", and many more.

24 ***Dar He: The Story of Emmett Till presented by Mike Wiley***

Through conversations with a *Look* magazine journalist, Emmett Till's mother, and others caught up in the events that led to Emmett Till's devastating fate, this riveting one-man play chronicles the murder, trial and unbelievable confessions of the men accused of Till's murder.

March 2020

27–29 ***Picnic presented by GSU Theatre and Performance Studies (TAPS)***

Set in the 1950s, this Pulitzer-Prize-winning drama explores themes of sexuality, repression, rites of passage, coming-of-age, and disappointment.

April 2020

4 ***Orbert Davis's Chicago Jazz Philharmonic: Legends and Lions***

The 60-member symphonic jazz orchestra will showcase jazz legends and young lion musicians. Vocalist Dee Alexander sings beloved standards from the American songbook and Orbert Davis performs alongside his personal idols.

16 ***GSU Dance Company presents From Tina to Beyoncé: 50 Years of Female Empowerment***

Dance numbers inspired by inspiring and empowering female artists such as Beyoncé, Nina Simone, Rhianna, Tina Turner, Jennifer Lopez, Lady Gaga, Diana Ross, Donna Summer, and more.

25 ***Viva Momix***

In an endless search for another gravity, MOMIX combines athletic dance, astonishing acrobatics, riveting music, outrageous costumes, inventive props, and pure talent to create an entertaining multimedia experience that will surprise, enchant, and astonish.

How to Purchase Tickets

- Online at CenterTickets.net
- Over the phone at 708.235.2222
- In person at the Box Office: 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL 60484

Box Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and two hours prior to all performances.

Flex Packages

Tickets go on sale to Flex Buyers (patrons who purchase three or more shows) on July 17. Flex buyers save 15% off tickets, receive priority seating, and enjoy refund/exchange privileges.

Know Before You Go

Tickets range from **\$10 to \$80**. Ask about additional opportunities for box seating and special events. Discounts are available for students, children, seniors 65+, groups of 10+, and patrons purchasing tickets to three or more shows.

Parking is free. For best GPS directions, use the location search term “Governors State University.”

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