



The
Kennedy
Center

FY 2021 Annual Report



Letter from Chairman **D** **M.** and President **D** **F.**

This September, we welcomed audiences back to our Kennedy Center theaters. After 18 months of dark stages and limited capacity programs, what was once normal became new again. This year has been about connecting with audiences, about inviting fresh opportunities and renewing traditions, and about the strength of our community.

we accomplished together—donors, partners, volunteers, audiences, and artists alike. In the pages that follow, what we are most proud of is a year of change and challenge met with *action*—full of ideas for what’s to come next despite the year’s continued adversity and uncertainty.

The season brought extraordinary artistry from our stages directly to your screen through virtual platforms. We gathered audiences together through hybrid solutions and safe outdoor

of the REACH. A reimagined Kennedy Center

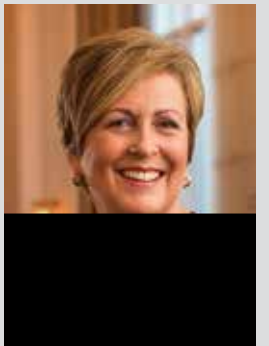
and broadcast nationally—with festivities spread across multiple days, venues, and screens. In the

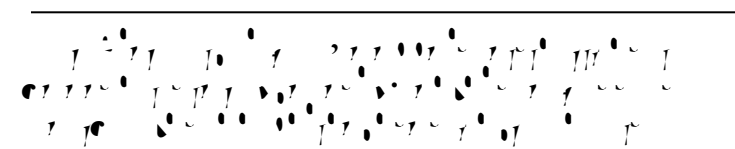
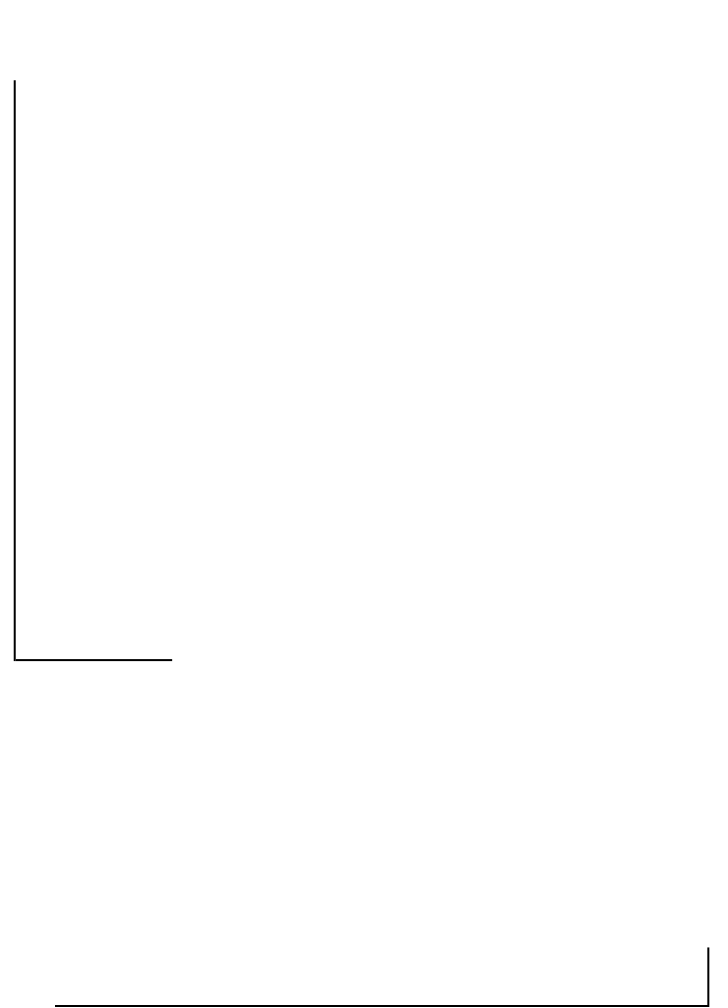
back to life for thousands of patrons.

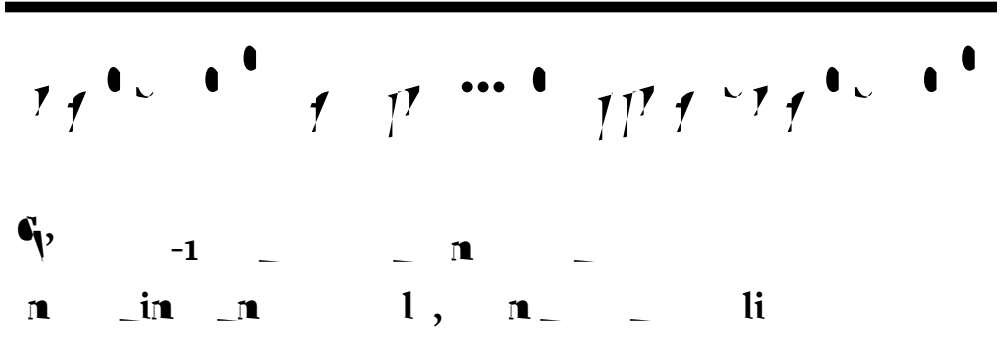
Throughout the year, the Center continued its deep commitment to uplift all learners through quality arts education. The creativity of virtual programs, conferences, and trainings expanded our national reach to provide even more access

students across the country. We also deepened our Social Impact framework to hold the institution accountable for fostering anti-racism within the Center and across the performing arts.

In closing the chapter on this year, we look beyond a “new normal”k tbeamework t



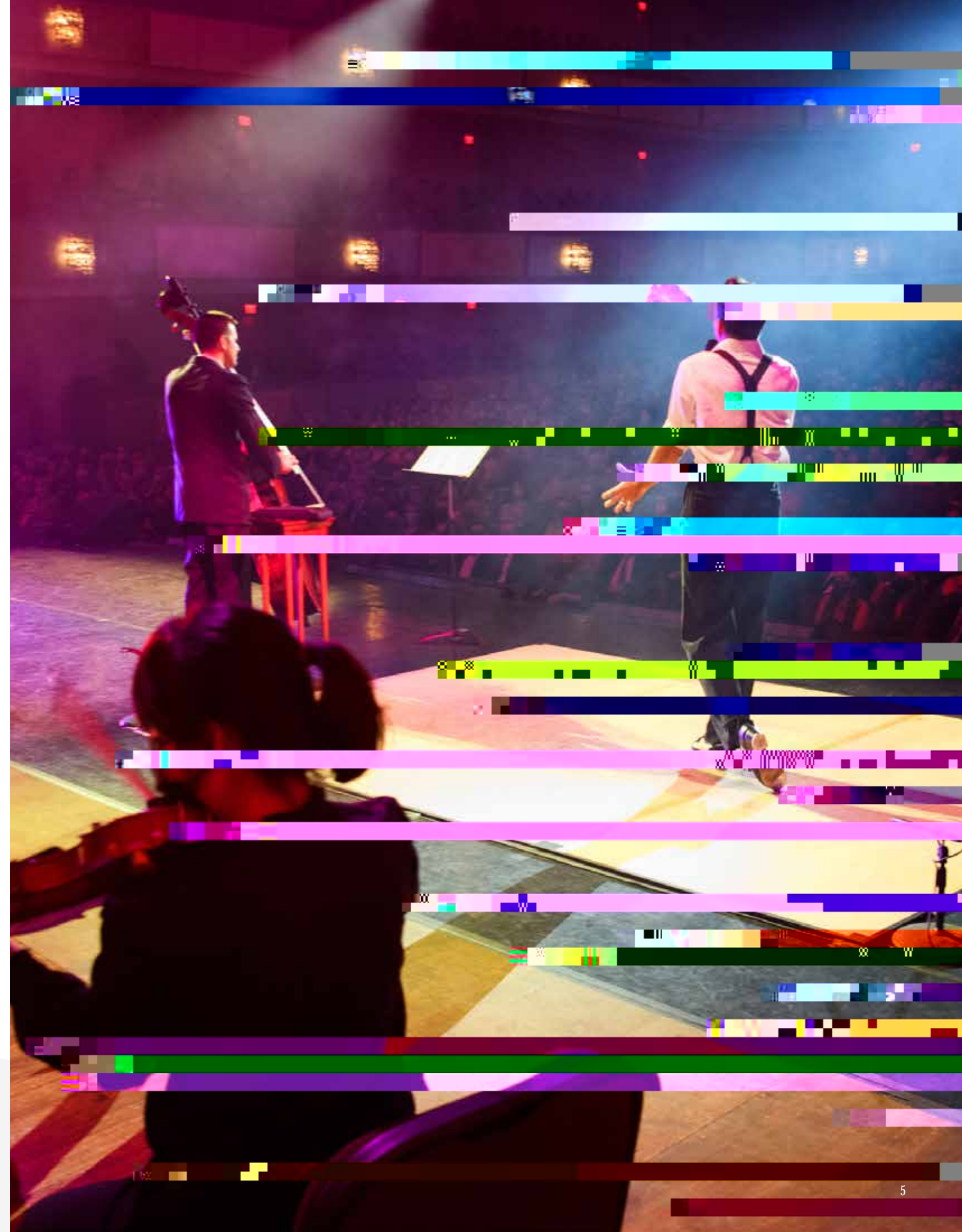


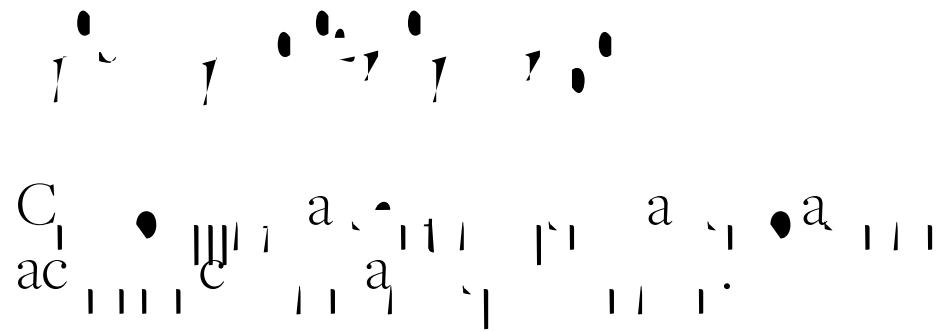


... Through a collective time of hardship and loss, we were sustained by beauty, connection, and expression. After months of inspiring digital programs and reaching our patrons in their homes, we finally were able to gather for live, in-person performances in September 2021. Our doors opened, artists returned to the stages, and audiences once again found their seats.

Our return to live performances was fueled by the art that had inspired us, the resourcefulness that had sustained us, and the creativity that had motivated us to overcome the challenges. Together, with a commitment to the safety of our patrons, artists, and staff, we opened and adapted our stages for a new and changing world.

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Patrons watched original content and extraordinary performances from our stages on [i i_1 _](#). Members, donors, and subscribers tuned into premium content on [i i_1 _ +](#).

With [NSO@Home](#), a dynamic collection of virtual staged performances and conversations with NSO musicians, the NSO brought the magic of the Concert Hall into patron's homes.

Washington National Opera released a [video](#) reimaging Beethoven's *Fidelio*, featuring a soundtrack from [N'guzi](#).



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In partnership with Center Theater Group on its own Digital Stage platform, patrons enjoyed three [performances](#) of electric ballets from Matthew Bourne.

The Education team streamed free [video](#) for educators and schools. In *Cenicienta: A Bilingual Cinderella*, Austin-based Glass Half Full Theatre presented its award-winning "story within a story" using puppetry, Spanish, and English to tackle cultural heritage, family, and the power of language.



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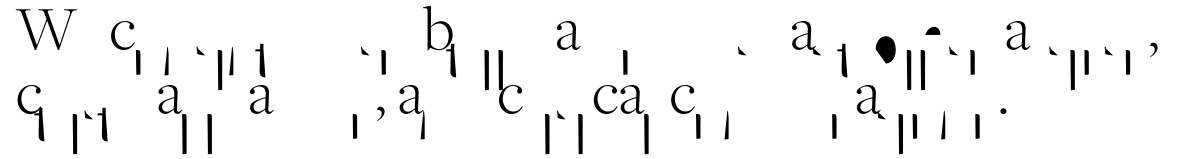
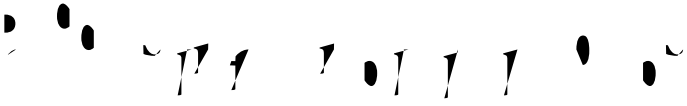


Audio: "Toni Morrison said Black is a Rainbow (Shadow)" from *The Sound Will Tell You* by Jason Moran

Virtual performances helped bring the arts into homes across the country—and offered patrons flexibility to participate in ways they felt safest. Patrons tuned in to events exploring culture, social impact, and the arts.

The first-ever [virtual session](#), led by Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz Jason Moran, hosted three virtual sessions for book lovers examining themes of music, history, culture, and the performing arts through literature. Special guests included Grammy-winning jazz vocalist Dianne Reeves, poet and cultural advocate Elizabeth Alexander, professor and author Imani Perry, Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence Jacqueline Woodson, and singer-songwriter activist Toshi Reagon.

In [a recent session](#), rapper and producer Derrick "D-Nice" Jones and fellow Kennedy Center Hip Hop Culture Council Member Jason King discussed the connections between music, change, and the enduring connective power of the DJ.



As the National Cultural Center, the Kennedy Center has a unique and urgent responsibility to systemically foster anti-racism within the organization and across the performing arts. Driven by the Social Impact team under the leadership of Vice President and Artistic Director of Social Impact _____, the Kennedy Center continued to advance anti-racism and equity across the organization and the performing arts industry.

The _____—a collaboration between the Kennedy Center, the Apollo Theater, and National Sawdust—aired live on YouTube to explore how artists and arts leaders can shape the moments of today. Topics included “incarceration, law, and politics” with special guest Van Jones, “borders” with special guest Tucson, AZ mayor Regina Romero, and “feminism and social justice” with writer adrienne marie brown.

_____ featured free and streamed weekly digital performances and dialogues to bring healing to our country, communities, and selves. Hip Hop artist Maimouna “Mumu Fresh” Youssef, writer Jason Reynolds, and social media maven Sejahari Saulter-Villegas hosted a rotating cast of artistic minds and performers, including a series celebrating favorite _____



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In alignment with the world’s greatest artists, programming in the REACH reflects the active intelligence of culture makers of all stripes and vocations. The Kennedy Center _____ is an assembly of DC individuals, organizations, and initiatives that we honor, financially support, and hold space for in our programming of the REACH.

As warm days approached, Social Impact and the Culture Caucus’s partner organizations curated the _____ series of 19 free mini-festivals. Each weekend hosted films, live performances, arts vendors, dance, yoga, and more. Partnering organizations included the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, National Theater for the Deaf, Smithsonian Asian American Center, Creative Nomads, SAMASAMA, D.C. Legendary Musicians, Step Afrika, and members of the Drag community.

Hybrid performances—events offering both in-person and virtual options—allowed for a large virtual audience while accommodating small-capacity onsite audiences.

invited a small audience to sit on the Opera House stage to watch performances set

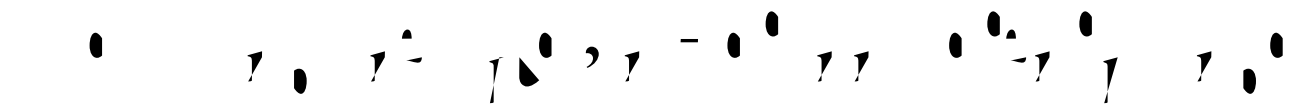
at the REACH campus.

With its 130,000 square feet of green space, the REACH campus served as a versatile canvas to safely bring the arts back to life. It offered an outdoor space for patrons to connect and dine together, including a market featuring local vendors.

The annual National Youth Orchestra performance was conducted by Larry Loh with special guests NSO Artistic Advisor Ben Folds, saxophonist Charlie Young, Carlos Simon, Jessie Montgomery, and Michael Abels.

The REACH campus hosted UNITE, a free outdoor and online art installation created and curated by International Programming. Over the winter, visitors could reflect on our common humanity and be inspired by expressions of unity, harmony, and peace from artists around the world.

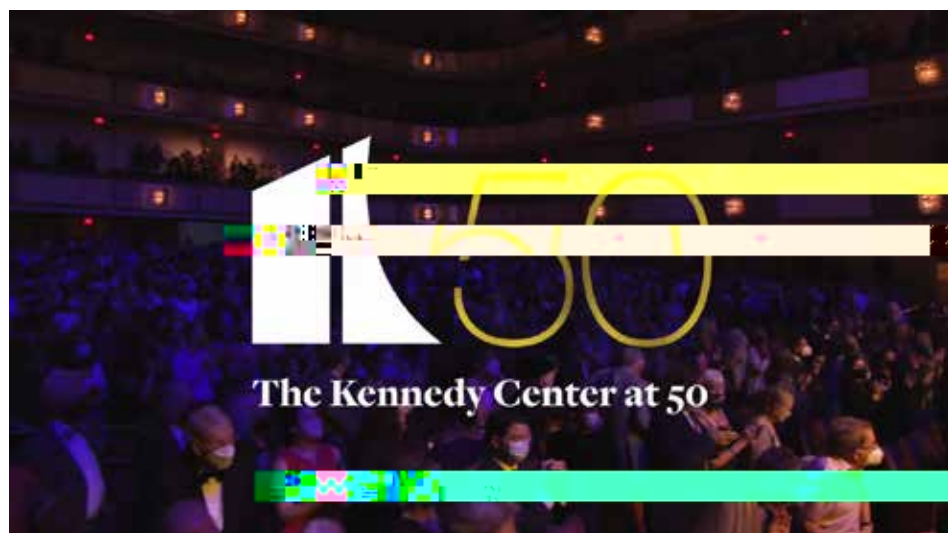
Washington National Opera toured its new production of *Ulysses* for free outdoor performances of recitals and a new family opera by Education Artist-in-Residence Mo Willems with music from Composer-in-Residence Carlos Simon.



W 50th Anniversary

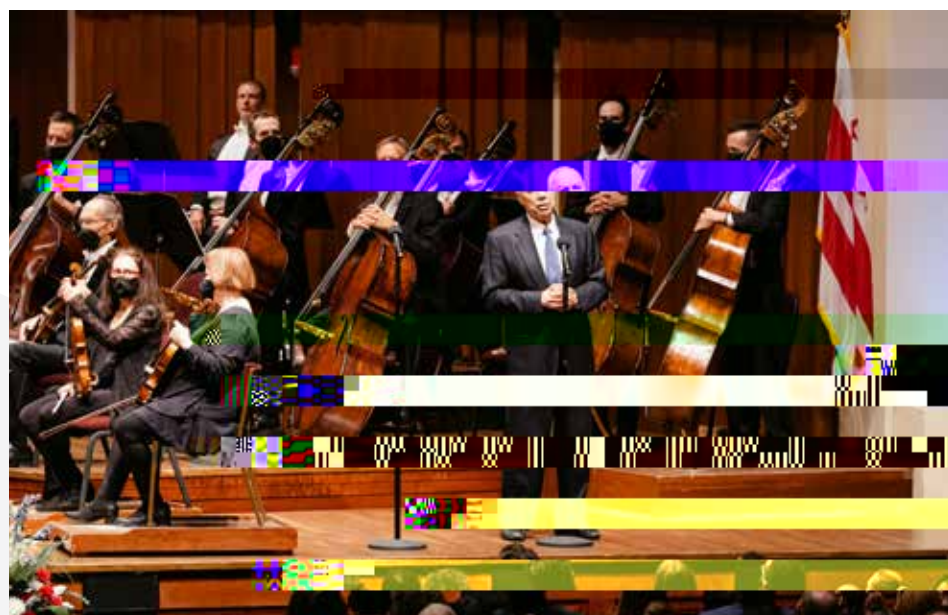
Live, in-person performing arts in America returned in the second half of 2021. We recognized this incredible feat with celebrations of our own: September 2021 marked 50 years since the Kennedy Center opened its doors to the public as the nation’s performing arts center. With two exciting opening weekends of events, we launched our season filled with activities to honor the special milestone.

Our 50th Anniversary Special aired on PBS on October 1, commemorating the return to full-scale productions at the Kennedy Center.



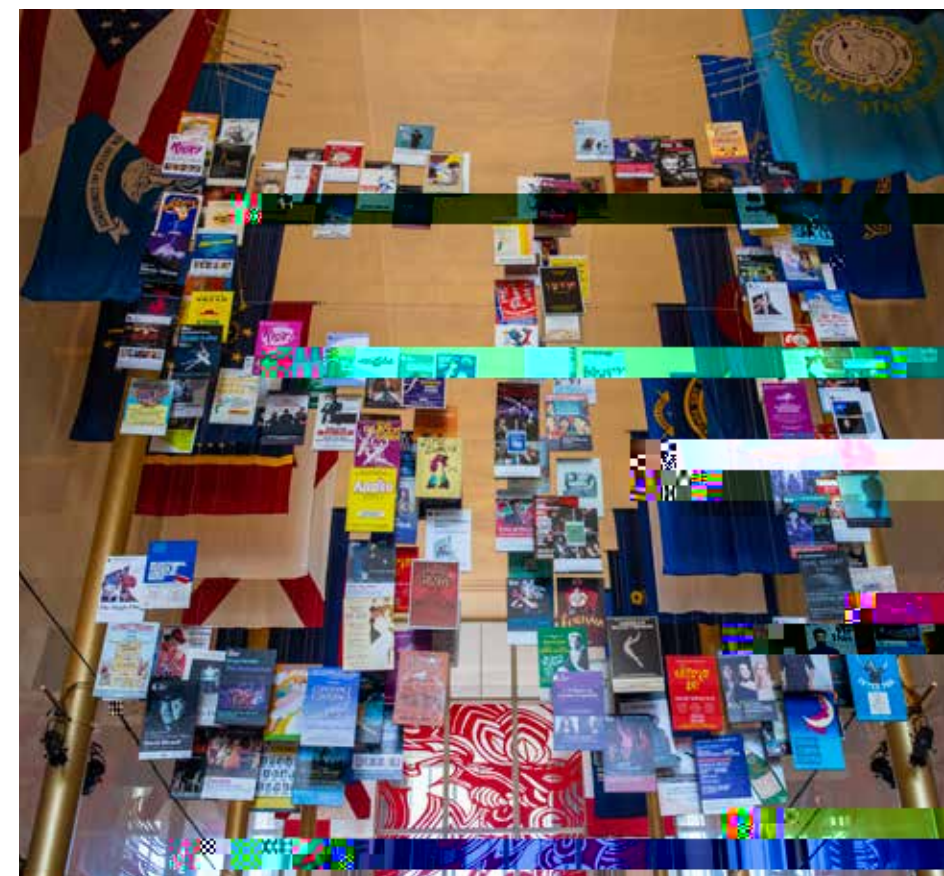
It was a historic moment for the Center, marking the return to full-scale productions at the Kennedy Center.

Performed outdoors at the REACH, the world premiere of Raneé Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy’s *Fires of Varanasi: Dance of the Eternal Pilgrim*.



The performance was a historic moment for the Center, marking the return to full-scale productions at the Kennedy Center.

To mark the 20th anniversary of 9/11, the NSO performed a free concert led by NSO Music Director Gianandrea Noseda and featuring the world premiere of James Lee III’s *An Engraved American Mourning*. Special guests included Dr. Francis Collins, the late General Colin Powell, Isabel Leonard, and Shirley Riggsbee, a frontline worker during 9/11 and the current COVID-19 pandemic.



The year-long exhibit was a collaboration between International Programming, Public Relations, and the Kennedy Center Archives—opened across the campus.



Engaging video, visuals, and archival content told the Center’s story in the voices of the leaders, staff, artists, donors, audiences, and community members that make it a “living” memorial.

Planning continued on the major permanent exhibit to open in the Atrium in September 2022. Entitled *The Kennedy Center at 50*, the exhibit will explore Kennedy’s deep appreciation and support of the arts.

In-person performances were made possible by safety protocols, including masking and proof of vaccination, established in collaboration with the Cleveland Clinic and following local and national guidelines. Patrons were cooperative and respectful while enjoying their return to live performances.

Our new digital program replaced the majority of printed playbills, offering an environmentally friendly and flexible format—saving 250 tons of paper waste annually. The introduction of digital in addition to physical and print-at-home tickets reduced congestion at the Will-Call line.



With N... virtual performances brought the splendor of the Concert Hall to patrons. Weekly live streams on the Kennedy Center's social media channels offered patrons intimate concerts as musicians performed from their homes. In special video performances, members of the NSO performed in stunning locations such as the Kreeger Museum and Mount Vernon.



Composer and arranger... was announced as the next Kennedy Center Composer-in-Residence. NSO Principal Pops Conductor... led the NSO in a virtual program of Simon's works, featuring narration from Rehanna Thelwell of WNO's Cafritz Young Artists.

The New Year's Eve special... filmed at George Washington's Mount Vernon and the Kennedy Center, aired on PBS with star-studded performances backed by the NSO.

Joining WNO and the Kennedy Center in... NSO commissioned composers Derek Carter, Nathaniel Heyder, and Jessica Mays to create three chamber works to be released in 2022.

Celebrating the Orchestra's 90th anniversary, ... and artists of the NSO were reunited in March when they gathered in the Concert Hall for the first time since the start of the pandemic. Four performances were recorded live for virtual viewing as the players performed masked and socially-distanced.

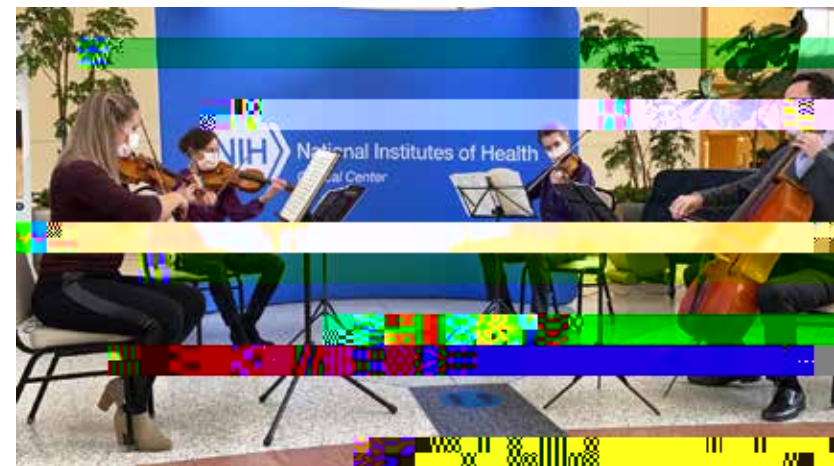
Soon, patrons joined in person. Two performances for physically-distanced audience and orchestra members marked Nosedá's public return to the Concert Hall, including a program with pianist Daniil Trifonov and a program of surprise works announced from the stage.



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The grand celebrations continued with the ... in September, featuring a night of unforgettable music from Kennedy Center Composer-in-Residence... new work *The Block*, music by Alberto Ginastera, and more.

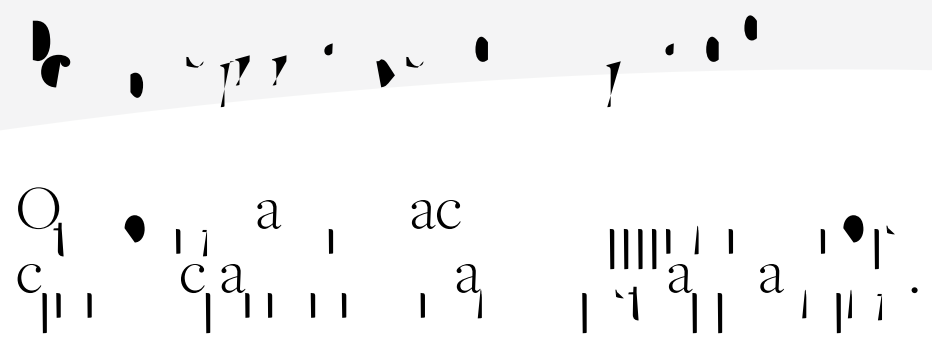
After two years, the NSO also made its monumental return to ... The summer season offered live performances ranging from Broadway favorites to some of today's most talented superstars.

N... continued to offer free performances for community members to reflect and reconnect with one another. In its 11th exciting year, the NSO's nationally recognized program brought live performances by NSO musicians to new neighborhoods in Washington D.C.'s Ward 4, Takoma Park, and downtown Silver Spring, MD. The month of free performances, in partnership with local artists and venues, celebrated the power of live music.

As part of the ... initiative focusing on the intersection of music and wellness, the NSO performed a free concert at the ... for patients and their family members, visitors, and sta .

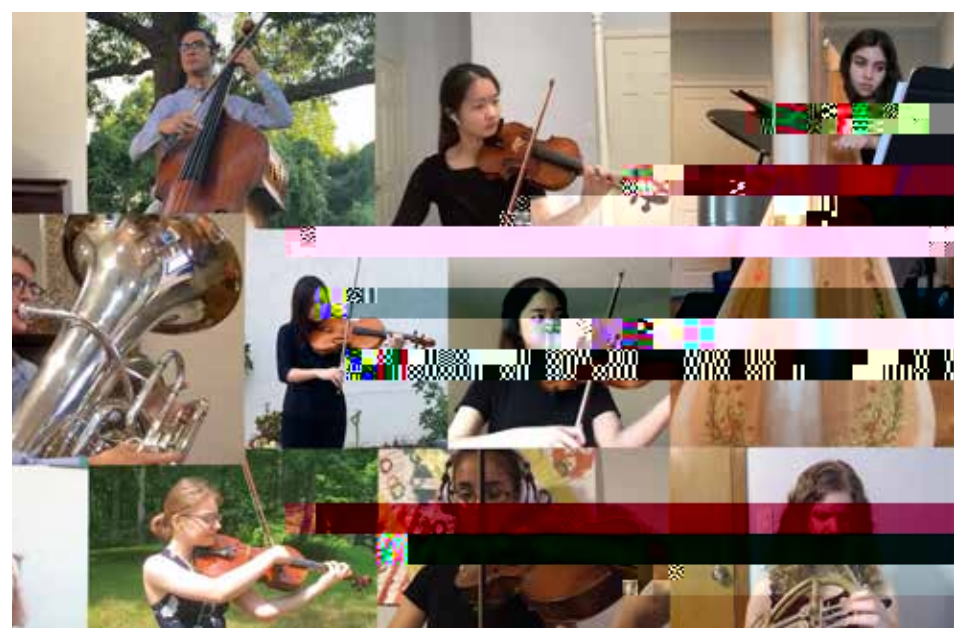
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As learning continued to pivot, the



OUR REACH

0 states and Washington, D.C.
1 U.S. territory
1 countries



PERFORMANCES AND PRODUCTIONS

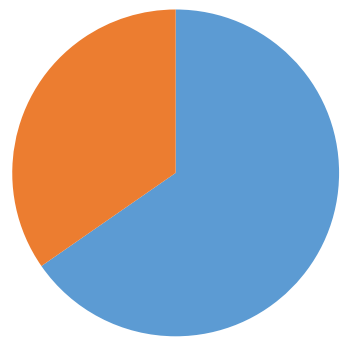
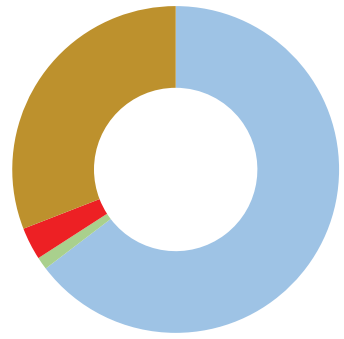
1 virtual performances
1 partner schools and universities hosted student performances
0 performances supported beyond the Kennedy Center

VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

1,100 participants reached through virtual programming and offerings
0 online courses for national audiences
1 participants accessed learning opportunities through virtual workshops, online courses, and conferences
1 virtual professional development workshops

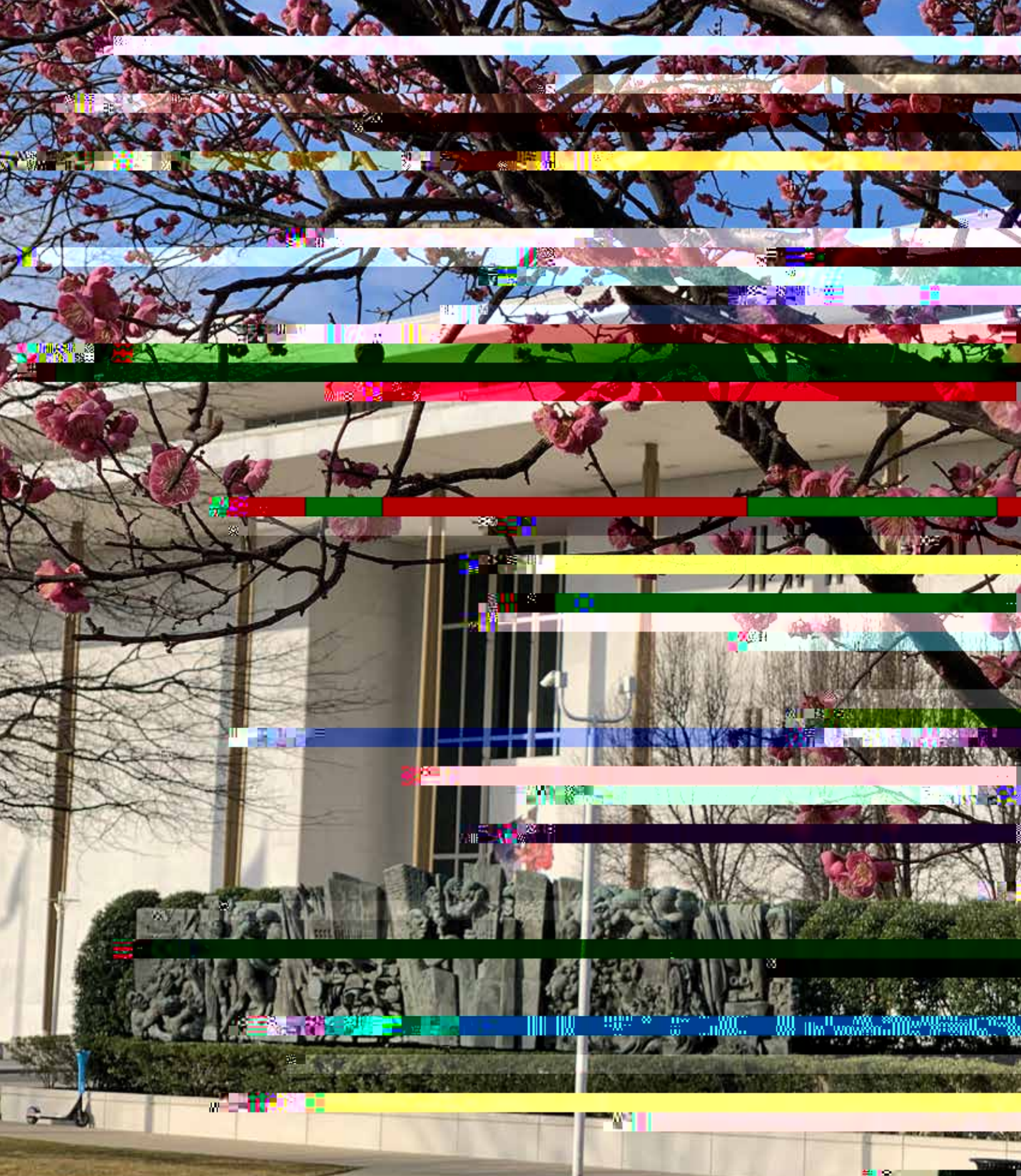
SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

1,000 students reached through school and community programs
1 audience members reached through performances, productions, and career development programs
1 external presentations for national audiences
1 student artists trained through career development programs



It is through the generosity of donors, partners, and volunteers from around the world that we are able to serve as the nation's cultural center, live ocnv misson,CS0 cs 0 0 0 scn/Go2Demo





The John F. Kennedy Center
for the Performing Arts
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20566