

Lincoln Center + New York Philharmonic
Your New
DAVID GEFFEN HALL

**Theater in New David Geffen Hall Named ‘Wu Tsai Theater’
to Honor Catalytic Gift by Clara Wu Tsai and Joe Tsai**

Defining Gift Spurred Acceleration of Crucial Cultural Investment
Creating Jobs and Underscoring NYC’s Vitality – Allowing Project to Open Two Years Early

‘Wu Tsai Series’ Established to Support Diverse Artists and Socially Engaged Works
Kicks Off with World Premiere of Etienne Charles’ *San Juan Hill: A New York Story*
October 8, 2022

Image Dropbox available [here](#)

New York, NY (August 3, 2022) -- The theater in the new David Geffen Hall will be named the ‘Wu Tsai Theater’ in honor of a catalytic gift by Joe Tsai and Clara Wu Tsai, philanthropist and Lincoln Center Board Member. The commitment was made at the end of 2020, and was the critical gift that allowed the acceleration of the project by two years, supporting more than 6,000 jobs at a time when they were urgently needed, with 42% construction participation from minority- and women-owned businesses and 52% of the workforce derived from underrepresented communities, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and New York Philharmonic leadership announced today.

In further recognition of the landmark \$50 million gift and Clara Wu Tsai’s commitment to ensuring diverse representation in the arts, this fall marks the launch of an annual ‘Wu Tsai Series’ that will feature performances celebrating interdisciplinary works from diverse voices that take advantage of the Theater’s unique flexibility.

“I am an ardent lover of the arts, and passionate about the role they play in our civic wellbeing,” said **Clara Wu Tsai**, Founder of the Joe and Clara Wu Tsai Foundation and member of Lincoln Center’s Board of Directors. “I am particularly passionate about Lincoln Center’s commitment to broadening the voices represented on stage and reaching new audiences, to help create a more equitable and dynamic future in the arts. Joe and I could not be more pleased to support this amazing project for New York City.”

“Through her long career, Clara has shown herself to be a visionary in the arts, deeply committed to the democratization and accessibility of culture,” said Lincoln Center Board Chair **Katherine Farley**. “With this defining gift, she will help Lincoln Center to showcase art spanning genres and backgrounds, and welcome more to take part in the transformative experiences of live performance. The acceleration of this project would simply not have happened without her.”

“The New York Philharmonic is eager to begin a new era with our return to the new David Geffen Hall, and with the Orchestra performing in the reimagined Wu Tsai Theater,” said **Peter W. May**, New York Philharmonic Board Co-Chairman, also speaking on behalf of his fellow Co-Chairman Oscar L. Tang. “The journey to this point has been a long one, but the result will be well worth the wait.”

Said **Deborah Borda**, President and CEO of the New York Philharmonic, “Clara and Joe’s visionary gift is instrumental in helping to create what will be a concert hall not only for all New Yorkers but a truly 21st century home for music that is open and embracing to the world.”

“Clara’s leadership is truly exemplary. She has helped lead the charge in our transformation, not just in ensuring the David Geffen Hall project is finally completed on time and on budget, but in ensuring we serve a wider and more diverse audience,” said **Henry Timms, President and Chief Executive Officer of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts**. “As co-chair of the search to hire Shanta Thake, our Chief Artistic Officer, and as an all-around thought partner, she has had a unique influence on Lincoln Center growing into a more active and equitable civic entity for the city of New York.”

The new annual ‘Wu Tsai Series’ celebrates diverse artists and socially engaged works. It is specially curated to demonstrate the flexibility of the new Wu Tsai Theater, and highlights synergies between art forms and cultures – inspired by Clara Wu Tsai’s commitment to reaching new audiences and championing new voices at Lincoln Center.

Highlights include:

- **Etienne Charles’ [San Juan Hill A New York Story](#)**, October 8: A Lincoln Center commission that will premiere in a pair of concerts on opening weekend of the new David Geffen Hall. An immersive multimedia work, *San Juan Hill: A New York Story* transports the audience via music, visuals, and original first-person accounts of the history of the San Juan Hill neighborhood and the indigenous and immigrant communities that populated the land on which Lincoln Center resides. Performed by **Etienne Charles & Creole Soul** and the **New York Philharmonic** conducted by Music Director **Jaap van Zweden**. In the lead up to the world premiere, Charles, Lincoln Center, and the New York Philharmonic are partnering on a series of conversations and workshops that will explore the preservation and transformation of culture, gentrification, community activism, as well as resilience in resistance to adversity, in collaboration with Weeksville Heritage Center and Jazz Museum of Harlem, among others;
- **Open House Weekend**, October 29 & 30: All are invited as Lincoln Center and the New York Philharmonic activate spaces throughout the new David Geffen Hall with a wide range of artists, ensembles, and interdisciplinary performers from across New York City’s cultural communities. Events include Family Day, Sunday, October 30, with activities designed for audiences of all ages. All events are free;
- **[GlobalFEST’s 20th anniversary](#)** in January 2023: A Lincoln Center season presentation celebrating global music from 12 bands from around the world in a day-long takeover of multiple unique spaces throughout David Geffen Hall;
- Afropunk’s first ever **Winter [Afropunk: BLACK HERSTORY LIVE](#)**, February 2023: Bringing their signature brand of vanguard Black culture and music in a two day-long takeover with female-forward programming highlighting the cutting edge in modern music, movies, fashion, and visual art by Black women from around the world, in a Lincoln Center season presentation;
- **[Chineke!](#)** March 2023: Europe’s first orchestra comprised of majority Black and ethnically diverse musicians that places diverse composers proudly at the center of their repertoire will

make its Lincoln Center debut, presented by Lincoln Center in association with the New York Philharmonic and the Juilliard School;

- [The March to Liberation](#), March 2-4, 2023: A New York Philharmonic subscription program conducted by **Leslie B. Dunner** and directed by **Tazewell Thompson** (who is writing the libretto for a work by **Courtney Bryan** being premiered on the concerts, which also feature works by **William Grant Still** and **Adolphus Hailstork**); the evenings explore social justice and equity through the voices of Black creators and, through them, their communities;
- [Julia Wolfe's unEarth](#), June 1-3, 2023: A New York Philharmonic subscription program featuring the world premiere of **Julia Wolfe's** immersive, multimedia oratorio *unEarth*, commissioned by the Philharmonic According to the composer, the work features staging, visual projections, women soloists, The Crossing, and the Young People's Chorus of New York City in addition to the Orchestra— she is “digging deep into the stories and science of our planet – looking at forced migrations, adaptations, species loss, land loss, and changing seas – and singing our fears and hopes for a way forward.”

Additional programmatic details will be announced in the coming months.

About the Reimagination of David Geffen Hall

Opening in October 2022, the new David Geffen Hall will improve the entire concert-going experience, creating the state-of-the-art Wu Tsai Theater to serve as the home of the New York Philharmonic and accommodating anticipated artists and audiences of the future. The project will bring online tens of thousands of square feet of new public space for diverse cultural uses, including performance and community. It is supporting 6,000 jobs and \$600 million in economic activity, and has exceeded its inclusion benchmarks with 42 percent construction participation by minority- and women-owned businesses, and averaging 52 percent of the workforce from underrepresented communities.

The David Geffen Hall design team includes Diamond Schmitt Architects, led by Gary McCluskie, on the Wu Tsai Theater; Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects | Partners, led by Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, on all of the public spaces; acoustician Paul Scarbrough of Akustiks; and theater designer Joshua Dachs of Fisher Dachs Associates. Turner Construction Company is serving as construction manager and the firms Kohler Ronan and Thornton Tomasetti are providing engineering services. More details can be found at www.davidgeffenhall.info.

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