

Lincoln Center

Lincoln Center Announces 2023 Series, *American Songbook: A Place You Belong*

Series Explores Legacies of Iconic NYC Venues that Nurtured
“Underground” Communities throughout the 20th Century:
Palladium Ballroom, Paradise Garage, Savoy Ballroom, and Café Society

Highlights include Ariana DeBose, Nathaniel Rateliff, Tito Rodriguez Jr.,
Charles Turner, Caleb Teicher’s SW!NG OUT, The Dragon Sisters,
Comedians Jordan Carlos and Ikechukwu Ufomadu,
and more

Conceived by Award Winning Writer and Director George C. Wolfe

April 1 – April 21, 2023

NEW YORK, NY (February 15, 2023) – Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) today announced the newest American Songbook series, celebrating the sounds and scenes that have made New York City a cultural mecca for generations. Conceived by writer, filmmaker and Tony Award-winning director George C. Wolfe, this year’s series embodies the spirit of four iconic NYC venues where creativity and discovery flourished—led by artists who could not find creative homes in the City’s larger, more established venues. The communities established in these locations paved the way for now legendary artists, creating new genres, and irrevocably shaping modern music and culture across the country.

Midtown’s mambo powerhouse the **Palladium Ballroom**; Soho’s gay underground dance haven, **Paradise Garage**; Harlem’s home of Lindy Hop, the **Savoy Ballroom**; and the West Village cabaret **Café Society**, one of the first racially integrated nightclubs in North America, are celebrated in a series of shows that pay homage to their rich legacies, while spotlighting modern performers with new takes on now classic sounds.

“This year’s American Songbook series, ‘A Place You Belong,’ collaborates with modern artists, musicians and comedians to celebrate four historic NYC venues that nurtured underground creatives and communities throughout the 20th century,” said **Shanta Thake, Ehrenkranz Chief Artistic Officer, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts**. “We’re thrilled to have worked on the concept with George C. Wolfe, an iconic American artist whose work has always been deeply rooted to history and place-making.”

American Songbook: *A Place You Belong* kicks off April 1 in David Geffen Hall, NYC’s newest cultural hub, with singer-songwriter **Nathaniel Rateliff**. This special performance, aptly titled *A Little Touch of Rateliff*, sees Rateliff and his orchestra perform Harry Nilsson’s 1973 LP of Great American Songbook standards *A Little Touch of Schmilsson in the Night* from start to finish, in

celebration of the album's 50th anniversary. The evening's concert concludes with Rateliff and his orchestra performing some of his favorite Nilsson originals, with the beautiful blend of Americana, soul, and gospel that has made Rateliff a household name.

Next in David Geffen Hall, Academy Award winner and Tony-nominated actress, singer and dancer **Ariana DeBose** debuts an original solo concert created with her long-time Musical Director Benjamin Rauhala. *Authenticity* showcases an array of musical influences—including Dionne Warwick, Stephen Sondheim, Judy Garland, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Ray Charles, and ABBA—that display DeBose's unique perspective as an artist through an intergenerational song list.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Greenwich Village was home to the basement nightclub **Café Society**, one of the first racially integrated nightclubs in the United States and a pivotal stage for dance, cabaret and comedy. Known for pushing the musical and political envelope, the space saw performances by stars like Lena Horne, Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday, who debuted her devastating protest song "Strange Fruit" at the end of her set. In honor of Café Society's enduring impact, The Appel Room plays host to three nights of cabaret led by house band the **Matt Ray Trio**, featuring performances from bombshell chanteuse **Rizo** and comedian **Ikechukwu Ufomadu**, Grammy-nominated R&B artist and Broadway star **Mykal Kilgore** and comedian **Aminah Imani**, and singer-songwriter **Raye Zaragoza** and comedian **Jordan Carlos**, with each night ending with a special guest performing Holiday's "Strange Fruit."

Just as Café Society was the pinnacle of its musical landscape, so was **Paradise Garage**, which decades later became a pioneering, underground house music dance club, and haven for NYC's queer community of color. Its longtime resident DJ, Larry Levan, known for his ability to craft and manipulate mood with his music selections, is a major influence on dance music today. Queer-owned and operated Brooklyn venue **C'mon Everybody** reimagines Paradise Garage in a one-night dance party blowout at the David Rubenstein Atrium with a set from **DJ Samuella**, hip hop drag provocateurs **The Dragon Sisters** and disco, Afrofuturist funk duo **The Illustrious Blacks**.

Harlem's **Savoy Ballroom** was one of America's most renowned dance and performance venues, birthplace of the Lindy Hop, and a beacon of integration. Its anti-discrimination policy led to a cultural cross-pollination and an influence on popular dance and music that still reverberates today. In the David Rubenstein Atrium, jazz vocalist **Charles Turner & Uptown Swing** and **The Eyal Vilner Swing Band** bring the spirit of the Savoy to life with a night of participatory live dance and music. The audience is joined on the dance floor by professional Savoy swing Lindy Hoppers from choreographer **Caleb Teicher's SWING OUT**.

Closing out the American Songbook series is a tribute to **The Palladium Ballroom**, a place—like the Savoy Ballroom—where all were welcome. The club attracted New Yorkers from all races, ethnicities, and social classes with its weekly dance competitions and incomparable Latin orchestras, including its "Big Three" headline artists-in-residence: Machito, Tito Puente, and Tito Rodríguez. Relive the Palladium experience on the dance floor at the Atrium, with **Tito Rodríguez, Jr.**, one of the leading timbaleros and bandleaders of salsa and Latin Jazz. Rodríguez Jr. and his band put a modern twist on mambo classics from the Palladium era.

American Songbook: A Place You Belong offers a mix of ticketing options including choose-what-you-pay and free shows. **Tickets go on sale to the public February 17 at noon.** For more information on tickets and the full American Songbook series, visit [AmericanSongbook.org](https://www.AmericanSongbook.org).

View/download assets [HERE](#).

**American Songbook: *A Place You Belong*
April 1 - April 21, 2023**

Saturday, April 1

A Little Touch of Rateliff:

Nathaniel Rateliff sings the American Songbook and the songs of Harry Nilsson

David Geffen Hall

In 1973, singer-songwriter Harry Nilsson released an album of standards from the Great American Songbook, an adventurous and unprecedented move for someone at the height of their powers in the rock era. The album, *A Little Touch of Schmilsson in the Night*, takes listeners on a narrative arc through infatuation, courting, marriage, separation, and the inevitable slide into old age. This April, Denver singer and songwriter Nathaniel Rateliff breathes new life into this classic album, blending his folk, Americana, and vintage rhythm & blues influences with Nilsson's classic tribute to the Golden Age of American music. After performing the album in its entirety, the evening's concert will conclude with Rateliff and the orchestra performing some of his favorite Nilsson originals.

Wednesday, April 5

Cabaret at the Café Society

with the Matt Ray Trio and featuring Rizo and Ikechukwu Ufomadu

Jazz at Lincoln Center's Appel Room

From 1938 to 1948, the hottest spot for hip intellectuals to see and be seen was downtown New York's Café Society, one of the first racially integrated nightclubs in North America. A pivotal stage for the best-known names in jazz, cabaret, gospel and comedy, Café Society was a regular haunt for Sarah Vaughan, Lena Horne, Zero Mostel, Josh White, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, and Billie Holiday, who often ended her sets with the devastating protest song "Strange Fruit." Versatile pianist Matt Ray leads his Trio as the house band for this three-night tribute to the Café's enduring legacy. Tonight's featured guests are two artists who draw inspiration from the avant-garde of yesteryear: the bawdy bombshell chanteuse Rizo and the waggishly absurd master of the non sequitur, Ikechukwu Ufomadu. Conceived by writer, filmmaker, producer, and multiple Tony Award-winning director George C. Wolfe.

Thursday, April 6

Cabaret at the Café Society

with the Matt Ray Trio and featuring Mykal Kilgore and Aminah Imani

Jazz at Lincoln Center's Appel Room

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Friday, April 7

Cabaret at the Café Society

with the Matt Ray Trio and featuring Raye Zaragoza and Jordan Carlos

Jazz at Lincoln Center's Appel Room

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Saturday, April 8

Ariana DeBose: *Authenticity*

David Geffen Hall

Triple-threat actor, singer and dancer Ariana DeBose is a Tony Award nominee for her lead performance in the Broadway hit *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical* and a recent Oscar, BAFTA, and SAG Award winner in the role of Anita in Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story*. For an encore, DeBose debuts *Authenticity*, an original solo concert created with her longtime Musical Director Benjamin Rauhala, at New York City's newest iconic cultural center, the reimagined David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center. With a setlist that showcases her love for a diverse array of influences—including Dionne Warwick, Stephen Sondheim, Judy Garland, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Ray Charles, and ABBA—*Authenticity* is a reflection of DeBose's musical loves, presented with her signature masterful flair for mashups, medleys, and candid storytelling.

Friday April 14

The Paradise Garage

As reimagined by C'mon Everybody

Featuring The Dragon Sisters, DJ Samuella, and The Illustrious Blacks

The David Rubenstein Atrium

From 1977 to 1987, the SoHo nightclub Paradise Garage was the center of the underground dance world and a key nexus point of New York LGBTQIA+ history, notorious for its all-night, experiential, and musically diverse explorations into sound. This celebration of Paradise Garage's memorable musical and cultural legacy, curated by the queer-owned and operated Brooklyn performance venue C'mon Everybody, invites the audience to come with their dancing shoes fully laced up for an all-night participatory party with live performances. Harlem DJ, producer, and youth advocate DJ Samuella opens the evening, followed by two pairs of non-binary rising stars: crossover hip hop drag provocateurs The Dragon Sisters and the rhinestone-spangled and afro-wigged disco divas The Illustrious Blacks. Conceived by writer, filmmaker, producer, and multiple Tony Award-winning director George C. Wolfe.

Thursday, April 20

The Spirit of The Savoy Ballroom

Featuring Charles Turner & Uptown Swing, The Eyal Vilner Swing Band, and dancers from SW!NG OUT

The David Rubenstein Atrium

FREE

Harlem's Savoy Ballroom was one of America's best known and most historically important dance venues, regularly hosting performances by Chick Webb, Ella Fitzgerald, and Count Basie. Renowned as the birthplace of the Savoy-style Lindy Hop predominant among that era's Black dancers, the Ballroom's anti-discrimination policy sparked a cultural cross-pollination that informs popular dance and music to this day. The spirit of the Savoy lives on in this evening of participatory live dance scored with swing-jazz played by Charles Turner & Uptown Swing and The Eyal Vilner Swing Band. The audience will be joined on the dance floor by professional Savoy swing Lindy Hoppers from choreographer Caleb Teicher's SW!NG OUT. Conceived by writer, filmmaker, producer, and multiple Tony Award-winning director George C. Wolfe.

Friday, April 21

iVAYA! Dance Night at The Palladium

Featuring Tito Rodríguez, Jr.

The David Rubenstein Atrium

FREE

Few North American clubs have so drastically raised the profile of Latin music and dance as the Palladium Ballroom, the Midtown dance venue that served as ground zero for the mambo craze of the 1940s and '50s. The Palladium's decades-long success is directly attributable to its "Big Three" headline artists-in-residence: Afro-Cuban jazz legend Machito, iconic percussionist Tito Puente, and the composer-singer-crossover star Tito Rodríguez. Rodríguez's son, Tito Rodríguez, Jr., continues his father's legacy on the bandstand to this day. Generally considered to be one of the world's leading timbaleros and bandleaders of modern salsa and Latin Jazz, Rodríguez, Jr. and his band will electrify the dance floor with a set of mambo classics done in the classic Palladium-era style with a contemporary twist. Conceived by writer, filmmaker, producer, and multiple Tony Award-winning director George C. Wolfe.

About Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) is a cultural and civic cornerstone of New York City. The primary advocate for the entire Lincoln Center campus, our strategic priorities include: fostering collaboration and deepening impact across the Lincoln Center resident organizations; championing inclusion and increasing the accessibility and reach of Lincoln Center's work; and nurturing innovation on stage and off to help ensure the arts are at the center of civic life for all. LCPA presents hundreds of programs each year, offered primarily for free and choose-what-you-pay, including many specially designed for young audiences, families, and those with disabilities.

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