



THE KIMMEL CENTER  
ACADEMY OF MUSIC  
MERRIAM THEATER

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@KimmelCenter hosts annual #gala to support 100% #free #arts #education programs, presenting annual "Center Stage Award" to #Philadelphia #philanthropist, Brook J. Lenfest, 10/21/20. Performance by 10-time #Grammy winner @ChakaKhan. More info @ kimmelcenter.org

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## ***OUR CURTAINS WILL RISE AGAIN***

**KIMMEL CENTER CULTURAL CAMPUS TO HOST  
GALA SUPPORTING 100% FREE ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2020**

**With R&B star Chaka Khan, 10-time Grammy Award winner**

**Second annual Center Stage Award will be presented to  
Philadelphian and philanthropist Brook J. Lenfest**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** (Philadelphia, PA, March 26, 2020) — Our curtains will rise again! The Kimmel Center Cultural Campus is proud to announce it is hosting its annual black-tie Gala on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 to raise funds to support and expand FREE performing arts education programs for youth, grades K-12. This announcement comes in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, reminding the community to be hopeful, looking forward to a future of great performances and valuable educational opportunities for our youth within the City of Philadelphia and beyond.

The memorable evening will be complete with a red-carpet welcome, celebratory cocktail reception, and dinner at the Kimmel Center, followed by a performance from 10-time Grammy Award winner Chaka Khan at 8:00 p.m. at the Academy of Music. During the highly anticipated Gala event, Brook J. Lenfest – Philadelphian, Chairman of NetCarrier, Inc., developer, real estate investor, Kimmel Center Board Member, and supporter of cultural institutions and education throughout the city – will be honored as the recipient of the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus’ Center Stage Award, presented by Keith Leaphart.

“Developed to honor Philadelphia changemakers, the Center Stage Award highlights individuals who have and continue to make major strides in support of our city’s youth through innovative education initiatives, mentorship, and more,” said Anne Ewers, President & CEO of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. “Brook J. Lenfest – in addition to serving as a long-running, valued member of the Kimmel Center board – is a preeminent supporter of both educational and arts institutions in tandem with the ideals that make up the rich fabric of our city and its future. Along with his familial philanthropic legacy, he recognizes the necessity to fund the arts and education for forthcoming generations, and we are honored to present him with the 2020 Center Stage Award. Though we announce this in the midst of COVID-19, we hope it serves as a reminder to truly appreciate the events we share together on the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus. Let us, together, look ahead to the healing power of the arts.”

Funds raised at the Kimmel Center Gala – chaired this year by Marguerite Lenfest – will continue to support the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus’ 5-year Strategic Growth education expansion plan, a program with a goal to expand 10-fold, educating, engaging, and inspiring 100,000 students per year by 2023. In-school & in-the-community programs focus on jazz, musical theater, and technology, while other opportunities provide a wide range of hands-on, in-depth experiences like matinees, student networking events, and neighborhood workshops. 100% supported by contributions, the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus offers access to quality arts experiences and multi-year opportunities to see, make, and understand the performing arts at the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus and in Philadelphia’s communities.

This annual Gala supports the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus in continuing to pursue its vision to *transform lives daily through the arts*.

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#### **KIMMEL CENTER CULTURAL CAMPUS ANNUAL GALA**

Kimmel Center Cultural Campus’ Commonwealth Plaza & Academy of Music  
300 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19102  
Wednesday, October 21, 2020

- 4:45 p.m. – Advance red carpet interviews, by request
- 5:00 p.m. – Red carpet VIP guest arrivals, cocktails, and hors d’ oeuvres
- 6:00 p.m. – Dinner; *A private, casual dinner will be provided for media*
- 7:15 p.m. – Presentation of the Center Stage Award to Brook Lenfest
- 7:30 p.m. – Event attendees depart for Chaka Khan performance at Academy of Music
- 8:00 p.m. – Chaka Khan performance begins at the Academy of Music

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Brook Lenfest serves as Chairman of NetCarrier, Inc., a leading integrated communications service provider. Mr. Lenfest is an accomplished real estate investor and developer with projects in Pennsylvania, Florida, Wyoming and Barbados. He is also a venture capital investor and serves on the Board of multiple companies.

Mr. Lenfest's conviction to giving back to the local community is focused through educational and cultural support. The Brook J. Lenfest Foundation is a charitable foundation established by Brook J. Lenfest in 2000. It is dedicated to making people aware of positive life choices and providing support and opportunities for those motivated to pursue them. In keeping with its mission, the Foundation focuses mainly on education, job training and mentoring programs. Through his Foundation Mr. Lenfest is the lead and founding funder of Mastery Charter Schools and has scholarship programs at Pennsylvania State and Temple Universities in cooperation with Mastery Charter Schools and Philadelphia Futures.

Mr. Lenfest is a competitive sailor and avid art collector, with particular expertise in the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist schools. His contributions to the Philadelphia Museum of Art are part of the museum's permanent collections. Mr. Lenfest resides with his wife, Anna, in the suburbs of Philadelphia.

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Chaka Khan is one of the world's most gifted and celebrated music icons. A singer, songwriter, actor, author, philanthropist, entrepreneur and activist, Chaka has influenced generations of music creators during her four decades as an artist. A ten-time GRAMMY® Award winner, she has the rare ability to sing in a number of musical genres, including R&B, pop, rock, gospel, country, world music and classical. She is revered by millions of fans as well as her peers for her timeless, unmatched vocal style and image. The late, great Miles Davis noted that Chaka "sings like my horn." And none other than the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, has said that Chaka "is a one-of-a-kind, premier vocalist."

During her legendary career, Chaka has released 22 albums and racked up ten Number One songs on the Billboard charts, seven RIAA-certified gold singles and ten RIAA-certified gold and platinum albums. Chaka's recordings have resulted in more than 2,000 catalog song placements.

"I am so humbled by the love, support and gracious spirit of my fans worldwide and the continuous support my peers have shown over the years," says Chaka. "Throughout my career, I have been through the fire a few times over and I'm still here as a living testament to God's love and grace."

Still at the height of her astounding vocal powers, Chaka Khan is creating new projects and earning new honors. Her latest single "Like Sugar" has earned high marks from tastemakers; the track is from her brand-new album-length project *Hello Happiness*, due in the first quarter of 2019. In addition, Chaka is making history once again, as she has been named Grand Marshal of the 2019 Tournament of Roses Parade, making her not only the first African American Grand Marshal in the traditional New Year's Day celebration's 130-year history, but the first Grand Marshal to perform during the parade.

Beginnings

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Chaka began singing in local groups as a teen before being invited to join the group Rufus. Her fiery vocals on the group's debut album caught the attention of music icon Stevie Wonder, who penned her first smash hit with Rufus, "Tell Me Something Good" The single from the group's 1974 platinum-selling album, *Rags to Rufus*, earned Chaka her first GRAMMY® Award. With Chaka as the group's dynamic lead singer, Rufus was soon selling out shows across the country and dominating the airwaves with such hits as "You Got the Love" "Once You Get Started," "Sweet Thing," "Everlasting Love," "Do You Love What You Feel?" and "Ain't Nobody," which earned a second GRAMMY® Award for the group. Together, Rufus and Chaka Khan racked up five RIAA-certified gold and platinum albums.

In 1978, Chaka blazed onto the music scene as a solo artist with the release of the smash hit "I'm Every Woman," written by Ashford & Simpson. This enduring and iconic hit has been re-recorded numerous times, inspired by Chaka's incredible original performance. Continuing her work with the late mega-producer Arif Mardin (Aretha Franklin, Bette Midler), her catalog grew with such hits as "Clouds," "Papillon," and "What 'Cha Gonna Do For Me?" It was during this time that Chaka began pursuing her love of jazz. She and Mardin brilliantly re-worked the classic "Night in Tunisia" with the song's originator, Dizzy Gillespie, on trumpet. Chaka also recorded an album of jazz standards titled *Echoes of an Era*, which featured jazz luminaries Chick Corea, Stanley Clarke, and Lenny White. Her crowning achievement in jazz was the GRAMMY® Award-winning tune "Be Bop Medley" from the 1983 album *Chaka Khan*, which also won a GRAMMY® for Best Female R&B Vocal Performance.

In 1984 Chaka Khan was catapulted to global superstardom with the release of her smash hit "I Feel For You." Originally written and first performed by Prince, this chart-topping, GRAMMY® -winning recording also made history as the first R&B song to feature a rap, which was performed by Grandmaster Melle Mel. Chaka also topped the charts with "This Is My Night" and the instant classic "Through The Fire."

Chaka's vocal intensity, soulfulness, and ability to work within different genres made artists in pop and rock take notice. Chaka lent her voice and production skills to two of the biggest hits of 1986, Steve Winwood's "Higher Love" and Robert Palmer's "Addicted to Love." Both eventually earned GRAMMY® Awards. She has since worked with a who's who of artists, including Miles Davis, Quincy Jones, Dizzy Gillespie, Stevie Wonder, Prince, Steve Winwood, Mary J. Blige, George Benson, Larry Graham, the London Symphony Orchestra and countless others, earning awards and accolades along the way. Her 2007 album project *Funk This!*, featuring collaborations with former bandmate Tony Maiden, Michael McDonald, and Mary J. Blige, earned two GRAMMY® Awards for "Disrespectful" with Mary J. Blige and the album as a whole.

#### Other Noted Achievements

Chaka Khan has received a steady stream of accolades for both her artistry and philanthropy. Her awards include the Soul Train Legend Award (2009), the BET Lifetime Achievement Award (2006), the GRAMMY® Honors Award from the NARAS Chicago Chapter (2006) and the World Music Award Lifetime Achievement Award (2003). Previously nominated for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame four times – twice as a solo artist and twice with Rufus – she has been nominated again as a 2019 inductee candidate.

In 2011, Chaka received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and was honored with the United Negro College Fund's An Evening of Stars Tribute with performances by Stevie Wonder, Fantasia, Ledisi, El DeBarge, Faith Evans, Angie Stone, Ginuwine, Chaka's brother Mark Stevens, and her daughter, Indira

Khan, among others. In June 2012, she was inducted into the Hollywood Bowl Hall of Fame, alongside such music greats as Frank Sinatra, Liza Minnelli, Stevie Wonder, George Harrison, and others.

In 2013, the City of Chicago honored her by designating July 28, 2013, as “Chaka Khan Day” and naming the street of her high school alma mater “Chaka Khan Way” after her. Chaka shared her life’s recollections in the autobiography *Through the Fire*, was published by Rodale Books in 2003 and is currently being adapted into a screenplay. In 2004, Chaka received an Honorary Doctorate of Music from Berklee College of Music. She has also performed in musical theater, debuting on London’s West End in “Mama I Want to Sing” in 1995; appearing in the Las Vegas production of “Signed, Sealed Delivered” in 2002; and taking over the role of Sofia in Broadway’s adaptation of “The Color Purple” in 2008.

Despite her busy schedule, Chaka has always made time to support and uplift her community. In 1999, inspired by her autistic nephew, Chaka established the Chaka Khan Foundation to raise awareness, provide resources, and explore treatments for children with autism in underserved communities. She later expanded the mission of the foundation to focus on women and children at risk. In July 2012, Chaka received the McDonald’s Corporation’s 365Black Award for her leadership of the Chaka Khan Foundation. The organization raised \$1.4 million for autism awareness and research and, on behalf of the autism community, Chaka lobbied on Capitol Hill meeting with the Black and Hispanic Caucuses’ to reauthor the Combating Autism Act of 2006. As a result, the act was renewed and is slated to provide more than \$3 billion for autism research and other services by 2019.

Chaka Khan is also an entrepreneur. In 2019 she will be gearing up to launch in collaboration with her long-term hair stylist and creative director, turned manager, George Robert Fuller, a full collection of Chaka Khan inspired wigs and hair pieces for the everyday, modern female consumer, powered by Indique Hair. Chaka’s latest body of work, *Hello Happiness*, a 7-track album executive produced by English production powerhouse Switch, was released on February 15th, 2019 under Diary Records/IslandRecords. The 10-time GRAMMY® Award-winner is looking forward to a celebration of a lifetime this year and beyond!

### **The Kimmel Center Cultural Campus**

Located in the heart of Center City, Philadelphia, our mission is to engage the region’s diverse communities with art through performance and education. Our Cultural Campus serves more than 1 million guests per year and includes the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, the Academy of Music, and the Merriam Theater- representing more than 160 years of rich history for the performing arts along Philadelphia’s Avenue of the Arts. We are home to eight esteemed Resident Companies: The Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Ballet, The Philly POPS, PHILADANCO, The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and Curtis Institute of Music. With nearly 9,000 seats per night, we are the region’s most impactful performing arts center, and the second largest in the country. Our Cultural Campus serves as a preeminent and inclusive place to enjoy exceptional experiences that reflect the spirit of our region by cultivating a creative and socially responsible environment where our community shares experiences that are delivered with pride, integrity, and respect. As a 501 c 3 nonprofit organization, we collaborate on, present, and produce a broad range of relevant and meaningful events, we serve as an active gathering space for social and community events, we educate the region’s young people through access to quality arts experiences, and we provide support to artists in the creation of new work. TD Bank, America’s Most Convenient

Bank, is our proud sponsor of the Kimmel Center's 2019-20 Season. American Airlines is the official airline of Broadway Philadelphia. For additional information, visit [www.kimmelcenter.org](http://www.kimmelcenter.org).