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## **TEDDY ABRAMS' *THE GREATEST: MUHAMMAD ALI* 80TH ANNIVERSARY GALA STARTS THE EVENING**

Louisville, KY (9.27.2017)... As a part of the Brown-Forman LO Classics Series, on Saturday, November 4 at 8PM, Teddy Abrams and the Louisville Orchestra will present the world premiere of Teddy Abrams' new genre-straddling work, ***The Greatest: Muhammad Ali***, at The Kentucky Center. To celebrate the evening and the Orchestra's 80<sup>th</sup> Season, there will be a Gala Dinner prior to the concert, and then *The Greatest After Party* that will bookend the unique performance. **Tickets to the performance range from \$27-\$85 and are available by calling 502.584.7777 or visiting [LouisvilleOrchestra.org](http://LouisvilleOrchestra.org).**

Anchored by Abrams and the orchestra, the world premiere performance will feature a first-rate team of collaborators. Grammy-nominated baritone **Jubilant Sykes** returns, not only to perform, but also to make his directorial debut, after headlining Louisville's performance of Bernstein's *MASS* two years ago, which impressed the *Wall Street Journal* with its "coherence, humanity, and winning theatricality." Award-winning actor, writer, and director **Olivia Dawson** narrates the intricate story. Local Louisville hip hop artist and educator **Jecorey "1200" Arthur** returns to create the title role. Making her Louisville Orchestra debut in the female lead is **Rhiannon Giddens**, frontwoman of the Grammy Award-winning African-American string band known as the Carolina Chocolate Drops. The creative team is completed by choreographer **Rosie Herrera**, dramaturg **Martine Kei Green-Rogers**, and video montage curator **Marlon Johnson**.

A prolific and award-winning composer, Abrams immersed himself in Ali's life and legacy, which led him to delve deeply into race and other social issues so important to Ali and so painfully pressing today. Abrams explains:

"As a new Louisvillian and a musician, I wanted to offer an artistic tribute to the legendary figure who has inspired, influenced, and captivated humanity in the modern era. Learning from Ali's story and message, I've found both personal inspiration and a call for the world to be a far more peaceful, empathetic, and tolerant place."

These seeds come to fruition in his new work ***The Greatest: Muhammad Ali***, an immersive orchestral experience with music, poetry, narration, and dance. Three excerpts from the work – Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise," Walt Whitman's "Song of the Broad-Axe," and "Float Rumble Rest"

– were previewed at the orchestra's Second Annual Festival of American Music earlier this year, and the work will be heard in its entirety for the first time on November 4 at Whitney Hall.

Abrams said of this work, "*The Greatest* is not only about Muhammad Ali but about his impact on the world. When I started writing this, I realized there is no way to distill his life into in a 10-12 minute piece. It required something much, much bigger. When I looked at the finished score it was a 75-minute work. It is sung, but also narrated and rapped. It's like a 21<sup>st</sup> century oratorio that looks at Muhammad Ali's life and the things that we know and love about him, and the incredible and momentous issues that Ali confronted.

I used Muhammad Ali's speeches and poems (which are set as raps with full orchestra), along with the words of others throughout his era such as the poetry of Maya Angelou, Walt Whitman, and Amiri Baraka, and political speeches by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. I try and make all this come together in a celebration of our own hero Muhammad Ali."

## 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY GALA

Guests will have two opportunities to celebrate the world premiere of *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali* on Saturday, November 4 beginning with the **Louisville Orchestra 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Dinner**. This pre-show event will be held at 809 West Main Street starting at 5pm with valet parking, cocktails, and dinner created by renowned local chef **Chad Welch**. Guests will then have the option of transportation to the Kentucky Center for the performance.

Following the performance, guests are encouraged return to 809 West Main Street for *The Greatest After Party*, featuring local musicians, a variety of desserts, and an open bar. Guests not wishing to attend the after party may retrieve their vehicles from the Gala's valet service at The Kentucky Center.

Tickets for the 80th Anniversary Gala — including dinner, premium reserved seating to the performance, and access to *The Greatest After Party* — are available now for \$500 per person. For \$150 each, guests get premium reserved seating to the performance and access to *The Greatest After Party*. **For more information on the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala and ticketing options, call the Louisville Orchestra offices at 502.587.8681 or visit online at LouisvilleOrchestra.org.**

The Gala Platinum benefactors are Hilliard Lyons and Tops Louisville.

## September + October Snapshot

9.27.17 || Mostly Mozart || Kentucky Country Day School || 7:30PM || [Tickets](#) || [Info](#)  
9.28.17 || Mostly Mozart || Ursuline Arts Center || 7:30PM || [Tickets](#) || [Info](#)  
9.30.17 || Mostly Mozart || Paul W. Ogle Center at IUS || 7:30PM || [Tickets](#) || [Info](#)  
10.13.17 || Why Beethoven? || The Kentucky Center || 11AM || [Tickets](#) || [Info](#)  
10.14.17 || Why Beethoven? || The Kentucky Center || 8PM || [Tickets](#) || [Info](#)  
10.21.17 || The B-52s || The Kentucky Center || 8PM || [Tickets](#) || [Info](#)

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