

**Angélique Kidjo and Jeremy Dutcher to Perform with Yo-Yo Ma at Spoleto Festival USA**  
*Ma, Kidjo, and Dutcher will be joined by pianist Christian Sands and percussionist Magatte Sow on the Spoleto stage for an original program*

**May 14, 2024 (Charleston, SC)** — [Spoleto Festival USA](#), the country's preeminent performing arts festival, has announced world-class musicians Angélique Kidjo and Jeremy Dutcher will join Yo-Yo Ma for his much-anticipated original performance, [An Evening with Yo-Yo Ma](#) for the Festival's 48th season. The trio will take the stage together for the first time in a special program combining music and conversation.

Ma first met Kidjo and Dutcher during the Bach Project, his five-year, six-continent journey exploring culture's role in society, and both artists appear on Ma's 2021 recording *Notes for the Future*. Together, Ma, Kidjo, and Dutcher will call on the Spoleto audience to contemplate the great questions of life and art: What has brought us here? And where will we choose to go next?

"This program is a homecoming of sorts," explains Spoleto Festival USA General Director & CEO Mena Mark Hanna. "Yo-Yo was at the very first Festival in 1977 and was a Spoleto fixture throughout the 70s and 80s in the early days of his meteoric rise. We are also thrilled to welcome back Angélique Kidjo and experience Jeremy Dutcher's Spoleto debut."

A 2013 Spoleto Festival USA performer, Angélique Kidjo is one of the most vibrant artists in international music today. A creative force with sixteen albums to her name, Kidjo is a five-time Grammy winner. As a performer, her striking voice, stage presence, and fluency in multiple cultures and languages has won respect from her peers and expanded her following across national borders. Kidjo has cross-pollinated the West African traditions of her childhood in Benin with elements of American R&B, funk, and jazz, as well as influences from Europe and Latin America. *Time* called her "Africa's premier diva" and named her one of the most influential people in the world for 2021. The BBC, *Forbes*, and *The Guardian* have all highlighted her importance to the people of the African continent for her work on behalf of children as a UNICEF and OXFAM Ambassador. She has also created her own charitable foundation, Batonga, dedicated to supporting the education of young girls in Africa.

Canadian Indigenous artist Jeremy Dutcher is a Two-Spirit song carrier, composer, activist, and ethnomusicologist from the Tobique First Nation in Eastern Canada. He gained international acclaim for his album *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwa-konawa*, which earned him the 2018 Polaris Music Prize and Indigenous Music Album of the Year at the 2019 JUNO Awards. His musical style blends his community's songs with neoclassical, jazz, and pop influences and has led him to collaborate with iconic artists like Yo-Yo Ma. Dutcher's work has taken him to the world's great concert halls, NPR's Tiny Desk, and the judges' table of *Canada's Drag Race*.

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### **SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA**

Spoletto Festival USA was founded in 1977 by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Gian Carlo Menotti, who sought to create an American counterpart to the annual Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy, which he had founded in 1958. Now in its 48th year, Spoleto Festival USA is internationally recognized as America's premier performing arts festival. For 17 days and nights each spring, Spoleto Festival USA fills Charleston's historic theaters, churches, and outdoor spaces with performances in opera; theater; dance; and chamber, symphonic, choral, and jazz music. Spoleto's mission is to present programs of the highest artistic caliber while maintaining a dedication to young artists, a commitment to all forms of the performing arts, a passion for contemporary innovation, and an enthusiasm for providing unique performance opportunities for established artists. Beyond its role as a launching pad for young talent, Spoleto also serves as a catalyst for cultural change and has aided in Charleston's flourishing as a top arts and culture destination. With General Director & CEO Mena Mark Hanna at its helm, the 2024 season takes place from May 24 to June 9 in various locations on the downtown peninsula. Spoleto Festival USA is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization.

**IMAGES:** A selection of high-resolution images can be found in the online gallery.

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