

# Anchorage Symphony Orchestra

## NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jennifer Cargile, 907-274-8668



### Anchorage Symphony Orchestra presents

## *A Tribute to Ella*

Saturday, February 9, 2019 – 8:00pm  
featuring Aisha de Haas and Capathia Jenkins, vocals  
Atwood Concert Hall, ACPA

**Anchorage, Alaska – January 11, 2019** – Her soulful voice and signature style earned Ella Fitzgerald the moniker “First Lady of Song.” More than 20 years after her passing, she *still* tops the Billboard jazz charts. On Saturday, February 9<sup>th</sup> the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra honors this jazz legend with *A Tribute to Ella*, featuring vocal powerhouses and Broadway veterans Aisha de Haas and Capathia Jenkins.

A tomboy growing up in New York, Ella Fitzgerald was just as likely to be found playing baseball as singing and dancing. In 1934 her name was drawn to perform at Amateur Night at the Apollo. Ella’s plan has been to dance, but a dance act before her brought down the house, so she decided to sing. By the time she ended Hoagy Carmichael’s *Judy*, the audience was on their feet demanding an encore.

This gave Ella the fuel and encouragement to enter more talent contests, which lead to record deals. Starting out with the popular big swing bands, Ella survived the shift to bebop, but always had jazz in her heart, turning scatting into an art form. In her early career, Ella recorded covers of other musicians’ music with great success. Ira Gershwin once commented, “I never knew how good our songs were until I heard Ella Fitzgerald sing them.”

In the 50s and 60s when Ella was touring, there were many places in the US that discriminated against people of color. It was well known by those who booked Ella that she and her manager required equal treatment of all their musicians, regardless of color. Many in the Deep South were not happy with the way Ella and her manager demanded equal treatment, but her convictions were supported by her manager as well as other musicians and celebrities.

"I owe Marilyn Monroe a real debt," Ella once said. "It was because of her that I played the Mocambo, a very popular nightclub in the '50s. She personally called the owner of the Mocambo and told him she wanted me booked immediately, and if he would do it, she would take a front table every night. She told him - and it was true, due to Marilyn's superstar status - that the press would go wild. The owner said yes, and Marilyn was there, front table, every night. The press went overboard. After that, I never had to play a small jazz club again. She was an unusual woman - a little ahead of her times. And she didn't know it."

With a number of obstacles in her life, Ella leaped over them all and went on to win 13 Grammy awards, recorded over 200 albums, selling over 40 million of them. She worked with all the swing and jazz greats including Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Goodman, and many more. At a time when it was almost unheard of, she drew

audiences as diverse as her vocal range – all races, religions, nationalities, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Who better to bring Ella’s sultry ballads and sweet jazz to life than vocal powerhouse Capathia Jenkins and Broadway veteran Aisha de Haas. Both of these extraordinary artists graced the Atwood Stage performing Ella’s hits at the ASO’s 2017 Champagne Pops gala fundraiser.

Brooklyn born and raised, Capathia Jenkins has found a successful outlet for her two passions, acting and music. Making her Broadway debut in *The Civil War*, Capathia most recently was found on Broadway in Disney’s *Newsies*, playing the role of Medda Larkin. In between the two she was in an Off-Broadway revival of *Godspell* (she can still be heard in the original cast recording) and went back to Broadway for *The Look of Love*, and *Caroline, or Change*. Other outlets for her passions include performing with orchestras around the world, and guest spots on television series’ like *30 Rock*, *The Sopranos*, *The Practice* and others.

Joining Capathia is Chicago native, Aisha de Haas who started her singing career with the world-renowned Chicago Children’s Choir. After graduating from Columbia College Chicago she began her professional career with *Little Shop of Horrors* at the Royal George Theater and *Four Saints in Three Acts* with the Chicago Opera Theater. She then moved to Broadway where she performed in *Bring in Da Noise, Bring in Da Funk* with Savion Glover, followed by *RENT* and *Caroline, or Change*. Recently Aisha could also be heard as Medda Larkin in Disney’s *Newsies* (the same role played by Capathia on Broadway). She was in the 1<sup>st</sup> National Tour of the show and is featured in the “live-capture” film.

*Anchorage Symphony’s Tribute to Ella, Saturday, February 9, 2019, (8pm) in the Atwood Concert Hall, Alaska Center for the Performing Arts. Infrared headphones for the hearing impaired are available concert night from the House Manager on the Orchestra Level. Tickets: Adult, \$59-\$35; Youth, \$56-\$32; (prices include surcharges and fees). Discounts are available. To purchase tickets, visit the CenterTix Box Office at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts or [www.centertix.com](http://www.centertix.com) or call 263-ARTS (2787), toll free at 1-877-ARTS- TIX.*

# # #