

# Black Women Dominate Production Team of the Jazz Music Awards for Standout Recognition of America's Indigenous Art Form

*Award Show Garner Critical Praise After PBS Passport and GPB Premiere*

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES, January 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Praises are pouring in from the Jazz community for the inaugural Jazz Music Awards, which had its broadcast premiere

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*Wendy F. Williams, founder and executive producer of the Jazz Music Awards*

January 1, 2024, on PBS Passport's on demand platform, as well as the nine PBS member stations of Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB). The two-hour program is the first global, full-scale music awards show dedicated to Jazz and the artists who create it. Hosted by Dee Dee Bridgewater, the three-time Grammy Award-winning artist, NEA Jazz Master, and Tony Award winner, with Delroy Lindo, the widely acclaimed stage and screen actor, Peabody Award winner and Tony Award nominee, the show was packed with heartfelt tributes to special honorees as well as stunning live performances by some of Jazz music's best performers.

Essential to the show's original vision, dynamic structure,

and powerful scope is a talented production team anchored by Black women. Spearheaded by Wendy F. Williams, the founder and Executive Producer of the Jazz Music Awards and the General Manager of 91.9 WCLK, an NPR-affiliated station, the team also includes Executive Producers Terri Lyne Carrington, a four-time Grammy Award-winning recording artist, NEA Jazz Master, composer, and educator who also served as Musical Director, and Gwendolyn Quinn, a veteran and award-winning media and marketing strategist. Also contributing to the show's magic are Creative Director Thembisa Mshaka, an award-winning broadcast and digital brand creator for various entertainment and media companies, and Head Writer Janine Coveney, a onetime Essence and Billboard editor who penned the show's script.

“As a longtime fan of Jazz, I felt it was my mission to create this platform to celebrate the music,” says Williams. “It just so happened that the incredible team we were able to build for the Jazz Music Awards consisted of women who are all distinguished in their professions, both behind

the scenes and on the stage. We're extremely proud of the role that women played in celebrating a genre that has traditionally been dominated by men."

Women were also at the forefront of the presentation, as an impressive array of first-call female Jazz artists also supported the Jazz Music Awards with showstopping performances. Beginning with the show opener, where top-tier vocalists and three-time Jazz Music Awards nominee Jean Baylor of The Baylor Project, Jazz Music Awards nominee Jazzmeia Horn and five-time Grammy Award winner Dianne Reeves set the tone with a soaring and scatting rendering of "We Swing (The Cypher)," the presentation also included a scintillating medley of freedom-related songs in the Songs of Social Justice performance featuring Ledisi, Lizz Wright, Jazzmeia Horn, Dianne Reeves and co-host Dee Dee Bridgewater, Jazz vocalists Somi, The Baylor Project's Jean Baylor, and Lindsey Webster and harpist Brandee Younger also got a chance to shine in solo performances.



Wendy F. Williams gives remarks at the Inaugural Jazz Music Awards

The All-Star Band assembled by Music Director Terri Lyne Carrington (featuring keyboardist Ray Angry, alto saxophonist Braxton Cook, pianist Orrin Evans, Saturday Night Live bassist, James Genus, percussionist Gerson Lazo-Quiroga, electronics, DJ/percussionist Kassa Overall, tenor saxophonist Marcus Strickland, and guitarist Mark Whitfield) also spotlighted female musicians Milena Casado on trumpet, particularly on the tributes to Ramsey Lewis and Wayne Shorter; and Nikki Glaspie on drums, also featured on the Ramsey Lewis tribute.

Carrington notes, "After more than three decades as a Jazz performer, and working collectively with others toward gender justice, I knew it was important to have gender balance represented for this celebration. I'm pleased that the show not only honored deserving members of the Jazz community, but also showcased the incredible talents of a diverse group of creators."

Other outstanding performances included the "In Memoriam" tribute medley featuring the All-Star Band; a performance by saxophonist Brandon Cook of his smooth single "No Doubt," and a blistering, roof-raising set with Jazz Music Award winner and saxophonist Kenny Garrett in a tribute to McCoy Tyner, along with Jazz Music Award winner and keyboardist Orrin Evans, Terri Lyne Carrington on drums, and Saturday Night Live bassist, James Genus.

The Jazz Music Awards is available on demand on PBS Passport.

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