

# Dianne Reeves

Thursday, January 23, 2003, 8 pm  
Zellerbach Hall

Featuring  
Gregory Hutchinson, drums  
Peter Martin, piano  
Reuben Rogers, bass

Cal Performances' presentation of Dianne Reeves is sponsored by Bank of America,  
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Dianne Reeves, recognized as one of today's pre-eminent jazz vocalists, is among the most significant singers to come into her own in the last 10 years. During the decade that saw the passing of so many great female jazz vocalists—Sarah Vaughn, Carmen McRae, Ella Fitzgerald, Betty Carter, and others—a handful of new singers arrived on the scene to carry the torch into the future. Steeping their voices in tradition while at the same time taking bold steps in new directions, they found new audiences and assured jazz aficionados that the vocal heritage was in good hands. With her strong and agile voice, rhythmic virtuosity, and improvisational ease, Dianne Reeves was clearly born to jazz, but her singing draws upon a world of influences. As with Carmen McRae and Billie Holiday, Reeves' musicianship is tied to a powerful storytelling instinct.

The nobility of her singing is rooted in her childhood. Born in Detroit and raised in Denver, Reeves lost her father when she was two. But the women in her family—her grandmother, her mother (a nurse), her aunt, and her sister—provided an unshakable sense of security and fortitude. Music was another family gift. Her father had been a singer; her mother played trumpet; and an uncle, Charles Burrell, worked as a bassist with the Colorado Symphony. Further inspiration came from cousin George Duke, the celebrated keyboardist, composer, and arranger (and her future producer). As a child, Reeves studied piano, the source of her rich harmonic awareness. Her artistic and emotional grounding helped when she and other black children in Denver participated in one of the first

busing programs, where they were thrust into a pressure-cooker of racism, ignited mostly by parents from a less enlightened time. "It dawned on me that this was truly ignorance, the ignorance of not wanting to understand another," Reeves explains. Then 13 years old, she joined black, white, and Hispanic students in trying to educate their elders. She participated in sit-ins, spoke at a school assembly, and sang in a concert organized by the children to show how music cuts across racial boundaries. "Fortunately, it ended in a positive way," she says. "People began to take a hard look at themselves and made positive changes."

At age 16, Reeves put her vocal training on display when she sang with her high school band at a National Association of Jazz Educators convention in Chicago. One of the people who heard her was trumpeter Clark Terry, who invited Reeves to sing with various all-star groups and became the first in her long line of illustrious mentors.

After a few years of singing in local clubs, Reeves moved to Los Angeles in 1976, only to find that straight-ahead jazz singing was at a commercial low. That's when she learned to stretch her talent in other directions. She recorded with the Latin fusion group Caldera (in which Reeves made a lasting friend,

keyboardist Eduardo "Eddie" del Barrio, with whom she has co-written some of her most powerful

songs). Reeves also sang in an experimental jazz band with pianist Billy Childs, with whom she has subsequently worked for nearly 25 years.

Reeves recorded her first album, *Welcome to My Love*, in 1982. During that time, she wrote and recorded *Better Days*, a stirring remembrance of her grandmother. Since then, she has expanded the song into a gospel-like narrative about her youth. Holly Bass of the *Washington Post* called it “a picture of black Southern life as vivid as any you’d find in a story penned by Maya Angelou or J. California Cooper.”

Now a Blue Note Records recording artist, Reeves has recorded a total of 13 albums and has won two consecutive Grammy Awards (2001 and 2002). Her two latest releases pay tribute to her own musical heritage as well as one of the greatest jazz singers. *The Calling: Celebrating Sarah Vaughn* (2001) pays homage to the esteemed jazz vocalist who inspired Reeves to seriously pursue singing. Recalls Dianne, “I was struck by the sound of her voice—its color, range, the places it went to create feelings. I didn’t know the voice could do all that. She changed my way of listening, and all of a sudden, I had a place to reach for in my own singing.” *The Calling* features a 42-piece orchestra of Los Angeles’ top studio musicians, and was produced by George Duke and arranged and orchestrated by Billy Childs. Also released in 2001 was *The Best of Dianne Reeves*, a 12-song collection that charts her ascent as one of jazz’s most important vocalists.

In 2002, Reeves brought down the house with her spellbinding performance at the closing ceremonies of the Winter Olympics. She also appeared and sang in the 2002 season finale of HBO’s *Sex and the City*. And last November, Reeves was named Creative Chair for Jazz for the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Dianne Reeves currently lives in Denver, but spends much of her life on the road. “I really believe in touring,” she says. “It’s the only way you can get close to your audience.”

Gregory Hutchinson (drums) made his professional debut with Red Rodney at age 18, and has since become one of the most sought after drummers on the jazz scene.

Born in Brooklyn, Hutchinson grew up on 1970s soul, which influenced his approach to jazz. His concept continued to grow while playing with peers Benny Green, Joshua Redman, Christian McBride, and Eric Reed at the legendary Bradley’s Jazz Club in New York.

After a two-year stint with Betty Carter, Hutchinson began a long association with Roy Hargrove. During that time, his drumming was the driving force behind four successful recordings, one of which was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1994. Hutchinson really came into his own during the two years he played with Ray Brown. At that time, he was able to improve his musical skills while playing with and learning from Milt Jackson, Stanley Turrentine, and Oscar Peterson, a few of Ray Brown’s closest musical friends. Hutchinson credits his time with Brown as helping to develop his own personal sound and teaching him how to swing with the best. After leaving Ray Brown, Hutchinson joined Joshua Redman yet again. He toured and performed in Redman’s band for three years, during which he appeared on two of Redman’s albums, *Beyond* and *Passage of Time*. He feels that both albums are musically at the forefront of jazz’s evolution.

Hutchinson has most recently brought his combination of funk, swing, and groove to Dianne Reeves’ band. As he sees it, “if we, as young musicians, don’t start including our generation and the next in this art form, it may soon disappear.”

Peter Martin (piano) grew up in Florida and St. Louis, and his parents were his earliest teachers. His father was a violist with the St. Louis Symphony and his mother taught Suzuki method violin. Before Martin could speak, he could play the violin. He graduated to the piano at age three, and by five was reading, writing, and composing music.

When Martin discovered jazz in the seventh grade, his father worried—knowing only classical musicians, who would shepherd his son through the world of jazz? Then a young jazz musician came to town to collaborate with the St. Louis Symphony. Martin’s father asked if he would talk to his son, and the next day, Peter—all of 13—was allowed to skip school to meet the man who would become his first mentor: Wynton Marsalis.

Peter Martin is a longtime resident of New Orleans and an integral part of its community of musicians. He has toured with Betty Carter, Dianne Reeves, and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

Reuben Rogers (bass) was born in 1974. Raised in the Virgin Islands, he was exposed to a wide variety of music, including calypso, reggae, jazz, and gospel. Encouraged by his parents, Rogers was motivated to explore his exceptional musical talent. His first instrument was the clarinet. He then experimented with the piano, saxophone, drums, and guitar before finding his true love in the bass at the age of 14.

As a result of playing the bass, Rogers won numerous awards. He received various grants and scholarships from the St. Thomas Arts Council and other local organizations, and he was then chosen to study in Michigan and at Berklee College of Music in Boston. Upon completing Berklee's five-week summer program, Rogers was awarded a scholarship at the College of Music.

After enrolling in 1992, he was the recipient of several student awards, including a scholarship from the Fish Middleton Jazz Society. Rogers earned his BM degree from Berklee College in 1997.

Since attending Berklee, Rogers has had the opportunity to work extensively with such jazz notables as Wynton Marsalis, Roy Hargrove, Joshua Redman, Marcus Roberts, Branford Marsalis, Nicholas Payton, Alvin Batiste, Carl Allen, Billy Pierce, Marion Jordan, Betty Carter, Danilo Perez, Marcus Printup, Johnny Griffin, Eric Reed, Phil Woods, Donald Harrison, Mulgrew Miller, Jackie McLean, Benny Green, Javon Jackson, Mark Whitfield, and Dianne Reeves. Working with these great musicians has enabled Rogers to tour Europe, Canada, South America, Japan, the United Kingdom, China, Australia, Cuba, the Caribbean, and most of the United States. Rogers has also recorded with numerous musicians on such labels as GRP, Atlantic, Blue Note, Impulse, Verve, Alfa, King Records, Warner Brothers, and Criss Cross.

In his spare time, Reuben Rogers returns to his home in the Virgin Islands and conducts jazz workshops at the schools. His commitment to supporting the arts is exhibited through concert performances that raise funds for music scholarships for students living in the Virgin Islands.