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GUGGENHEIM FELLOW BILLY CHILDS PERFORMS WITH HIS JAZZ CHAMBER ENSEMBLE, JAZZ SINGER DIANNE REEVES, AND THE YING QUARTET IN A COMMEMORATION OF 50 YEARS OF BLACK STUDENTS AT DUKE, PREMIERING MAJOR DUKE PERFORMANCES-COMMISSIONED SONG CYCLE

Wednesday, September 4, 2013, Durham, NC — Duke Performances is pleased to announce that the 10-piece Grammy-winning Billy Childs Jazz Chamber Ensemble featuring acclaimed jazz singer Dianne Reeves with the Ying Quartet will offer the world premiere of Childs' *Enlightened Souls* — a major new song cycle commissioned by Duke Performances commemorating the 50th anniversary of black students at Duke — on Friday, October 4, at 8 pm in newly revitalized Baldwin Auditorium, Duke Performances’ first major presentation in the renovated hall.

Fifty years ago, in the fall of 1963, the first five African-American undergraduates entered Duke University, joining the black students who had enrolled in Duke Law School in 1961 and the Divinity and Graduate Schools in 1962. These pioneers set Duke on a path toward becoming a diverse, global institution.

*Enlightened Souls*, Billy Childs’ song cycle, was commissioned by Duke Performances as part of a series of intellectual, social, artistic, and service-oriented events that call attention to this historic anniversary. The premiere will make up the second half of the evening’s program and falls on the closing gala weekend of the commemoration. In addition to the performance, Childs will be in residence at Duke working with students and community members. Visit dukeperformances.org for a complete and up-to-date schedule of residency activities.

Among other accomplishments, including serving as Dianne Reeves’ music director, pianist and composer Billy Childs has made a name for himself leading his extraordinary Jazz Chamber Ensemble, which creates a sound that draws on the strengths of both jazz and classical performers. Childs’ performances, composing,
and arranging have earned him ten Grammy nominations and three Grammy awards. In 2009, Childs was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, and in 2013, Childs was awarded the prestigious Doris Duke Performing Artist Award.

Grammy award-winner Dianne Reeves — who grew up idolizing jazz great Sarah Vaughan — shaped her creamy, shattering contralto as a singer with both Sergio Mendes and Harry Belafonte. The New York Times declared that Reeves has “skyscraper authority,” and she has drawn comparison to the sultry gospel-blues of Mahalia Jackson.

Reeves and Childs have collaborated frequently since 2000 when Childs arranged, orchestrated, and conducted Reeves’ album The Calling: Celebrating Sarah Vaughan, an album that went on to win a Grammy award for “Best Jazz Vocal CD.”

Billy Childs Jazz Chamber Ensemble featuring Dianne Reeves with the Ying Quartet will perform on Friday, October 4, at 8 pm in Baldwin Auditorium. Tickets are on sale now and available online at dukeperformances.org, by phone at 919-684-4444, or in person at the University Box Office in the Bryan Center on Duke’s West Campus.

Made possible, in part, with support from the Office of the President of Duke University and 50 Years of Black Students at Duke University Executive Committee.

**NOTE: IMAGES OF PERFORMERS ARE AVAILABLE. FOR IMAGES OR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT KEN RUMBLE (ken.rumble@duke.edu; office: 919-660-3348; cell: 919-444-1667).

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