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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Kim Bratic—(540) 343-2624 x 219 or [kbratic@jeffcenter.org](mailto:kbratic@jeffcenter.org)

## **Jefferson Center welcomes Grammy winner Angélique Kidjo**

Hot off her recent Grammy win, Angélique Kidjo lights up the Jefferson Center stage Thursday, March 27 at 7:30 p.m. With music steeped in the tribal rhythms of her West African homeland, the Benin-born vocalist slides across musical boundaries blending funk, jazz and Afro-pop.

Her 2008 Grammy-winning recording, “Djin Djin,” returned to the soul of Benin, but with a marriage of cultures reflected in her line-up of all-star guests including Alicia Keys, Carlos Santana, Josh Groban, Branford Marsalis, Peter Gabriel, Joss Stone and Ziggy Marley. “It was important to me that all of these great musicians come with me back to my roots,” Kidjo says. “I’ve never compromised those roots because I know my identity, and I’ve learned that in order to give through music, you have to position yourself among other individuals who may be from different cultures and background and then find ways to discover that we’re actually not different at all.”

The explosive growth in the popularity of world music during the past several decades has broadened the boundaries of the world, reminding listeners of the vast cultural wealth and diversity in this wired age. But, the music of Angélique Kidjo offers another perspective: that the world is also much smaller than we think, and that no matter how far flung its peoples may be, subtle lines of interconnection span the globe, uniting its people. “I’m proud to be an African artist because I come from Africa and African music has been the biggest influence on me,” Kidjo says. “But I’m also a world musician in the true sense of the term.”

In addition to touring with Josh Groban last year, this chanteuse used her voice to raise awareness for global issues. In 2007, she covered John Lennon’s “Happy Christmas (War Is Over)” for the CD *Instant Karma: The Amnesty International Campaign to Save Darfur*. And in July, Kidjo performed at the South African leg of Live Earth. Recently, she joined forces with Annie Lennox and 22 other female artists to raise the awareness of the transmission of HIV to unborn children in Africa. Their musical collaboration, *Sing* was released on World AIDS Day on December 1. Bono of U2 has described Kidjo as the galvanizing voice of sub-Saharan Africa.

Before winning the 2008 Grammy for best Contemporary World Music Album, she was honored with three Grammy nominations and various international music awards including the Prix Afrique en Creation, Best Female Singer at the Danish Music Awards, Best African Female Singer at the Kora Music Award and the Antonio Carlos Jobim Award.

Tickets for Angélique Kidjo range from \$21-27 and are available through the Jefferson Center box office at (540) 345-2550 or online at [www.jeffcenter.org](http://www.jeffcenter.org). Tickets for children and students are half price. Angélique Kidjo is the final concert of the 2007-2008 season in Jefferson Center’s Star City series sponsored by SunTrust, Kroger, Scott Insurance, Elliot, CITY Magazine, The Roanoker, WDBJ Channel 7 and WVTF.

Jefferson Center is a non-profit performing arts center that enriches and educates Western Virginia by producing high quality performing and visual arts programs including concerts, dance parties, exhibitions, lectures and artist residencies.

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