

REGINA CARTER

ELLA: ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

For Sony Masterworks artist Regina Carter, the violin isn't simply an improvisational vehicle; it's a passport to unexpected realms. It's a Rosetta Stone that unlocks the doors to a myriad of cultures, sounds, and worlds apart. Her quest for beauty combined with her passion for excellence did not escape the attention of the MacArthur Foundation, which awarded Regina their prestigious MacArthur fellowship "genius grant". San Francisco Performances also took note of Regina's exceptional work and appointed her Artist-in-Residence for five years.

She also served as one of the Resident Artistic Directors for the discerning SFJAZZ during its inaugural season in its spectacular new home.

In 1987, she joined the all-female pop-jazz quintet Straight Ahead and appeared on their first three albums before leaving the band in 1991 and moving to New York. Almost immediately, Regina was tapped for session work with the likes of Aretha Franklin, Mary J. Blige, Lauryn Hill, Billy Joel and Dolly Parton. She also performed and toured with Ray Brown, Kenny Barron, The String Trio of New York, Cassandra Wilson, Oliver Lake and Steve Turre, among others. In 1995, Regina released her self-titled solo debut on Atlantic Records. Two years later, she released her sophomore album, *Something for Grace*, which was dedicated to her mother. That same year, Carter toured with Wynton Marsalis. Subsequently, Regina signed to the venerable Verve label, where she released *Rhythms of the Heart* in 1999 and *Motor City Moments* in 2000: a tribute to her beloved hometown of Detroit.

In December of the next year, Regina traveled to Genoa, Italy and made history by being the first jazz musician, as well as the first African American to play the legendary Guarneri Del Gesu violin. The violin, a marvel of master craftsmanship brought to life in 1743, was owned by famous classical music virtuoso and composer Niccolò Paganini. This once-in-a-lifetime experience inspired her next effort, *Paganini: After a Dream* in 2003. The album featured works by Maurice Ravel, Claude Debussy, and Italian film composer Ennio Morricone. 2006 marked a big year for Regina as she released *I'll Be Seeing You: A Sentimental Journey*, a powerful and heartfelt tribute to her late mother.

Reverse Thread, released in May 2010, was a celebration of traditional African music via a contemporary perspective. Additionally, Regina took her pioneering spirit on the road in the late summer and fall of 2012 for a two-month world tour with rock icon Joe Jackson, in support of his release *The Duke* – a collection of interpretations from the Duke Ellington catalog.

Regina continued her dynamic musical journey with her 2014 release *Southern Comfort*, in which she investigated her family history, exploring the traditional folk songs her paternal grandfather would have heard as he toiled in the coal mines of Alabama. The expanded project includes a blend of folk tunes and spirituals, serving as Regina's interpretation of her roots through a modern lens.

2017 marks the 100th birthday of a true musical legend, Ella Fitzgerald. Ella is THE source of Regina's musical inspiration and Ms. Carter's forthcoming album and touring program will celebrate the music and spirit of this incomparable musical juggernaut through from her own perspective. She explains her deep and visceral

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connection to Ella's music, an influence Regina has cherished throughout her life, "Growing up in Detroit, there was always music playing in our home. While there was a variety of music I enjoyed, there were a few artists I found consistently captivating—Ella Fitzgerald was one of these exceptions. To this very day, whenever I hear an Ella recording it grabs me at my core. I'm entranced by her voice, her melodic improvisations and the passion and artfulness with which Ella sings a song. In a word, Ella is sublime, and she is at the top of my go-to list when learning a jazz tune. I'm so excited to celebrate Ella Fitzgerald, an artist who has meant so much to all the notes in my musical life."