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Kennedy center honors 2015 performers

If you've ever wanted to see Aretha Franklin on stage with R2-D2, this is your chance. Annual Kennedy Center Honors air Tuesday, paying tribute to Star Wars director and visual effects maverick George Lucas, singer/songwriter Carole King, pioneering actresses Rita Moreno and Cicely Tyson, and conductor Seiji Ozawa. Hosted by Stephen Colbert, the evening features, as usual, a starring list of presenters and artists. Here are five moments you won't want to miss.1. Gina Rodriguez's love letter to Rita Moreno. As you see in our exclusive sneak peek above, the Jane the Virgin star finally gets to tell the EGOT winner everything she wished she could have said to her when she thought about sending her idol a letter at the age of 15. It's a perfect, moving beginning to tonight's tribute, and as Rodriguez recalls asking his mother Mom, when are Puerto Ricans coming on? because she had never seen one on screen, also a powerful reminder of how much representation matters. Moreno's tribute also includes Rosie Perez performing Fever with Animal, in honor of Moreno's Emmy-winning performance on The Muppet Show and Hamilton's Lin-Manuel Miranda sharing the story of Moreno storming the stage like an altruistic Kanye West at a charity event when the audience ignored entertainment before introducing a performance of America from West Side Story (which, Colbert notes, opened a generation's eyes to the dangers of ballet gang violence). 2. Aretha Franklin steals the show. The Carole King tribute closes the two-hour telecast, and instead of making the traditional video biography, Cholina Kennedy, currently starring as Carole in the Broadway musical Beautiful, tells King's life story on stage. Other artists include Janelle Monáe (Will You Love Me Tomorrow and One Fine Day), James Taylor (Up on the Roof and Sara Bareilles (You've Got a Friend), but it's The Queen of Soul who brings the audience to their feet. King can hardly contain herself when Aretha takes the stage wearing a fur coat and hugged her purse, then sits down at a piano to sing Natural Woman. It brought a tear to President Obama's eye. But when Aretha loses her coat, everyone's fine. The evening closes with people who attended the various tributes returning to I Feel the Earth Move - this is where you get wonderfully random pictures of Franklin and R2-D2, and Taylor and C-3PO, sharing the same scene.3. Put the storm troopers in line. The most timely of the tributes, Lucas's part of the program needs two James Earl Jones-narrated biopics to paint a full portrait of him as a storyteller and technological innovator. Steven Spielberg is ready to explain how Star Wars changed movies (and joke that at 71, Lucas still has all his hair, like Chewbacca), while Martin Scorsese describes Lucas's passions - cars, movies, movies about cars and music. It's the last one that Scorsese says will be another character in Lucas's film leading the way The Kennedy Center Honors Orchestra performs the legendary themes of Indiana Jones and Star Wars (with appearances by a few special guests, as seen in the picture above). With the accompanying light show and confetti drop, it makes you wish you were in that theater. 4. CeCe Winans performs Blessed Assurance. Tyler Perry, Viola Davis, and Kerry Washington give poignant speeches about 91-year-old powerhouse Cicely Tyson. But it's gospel great Winans singing Blessed Assurance, a hymn that Tony winner Tyson sang during every performance of the play The Trip to Bountiful that makes everyone - from Tyson himself to sitting guest Usher - tear up. She is joined by the Cicely Tyson Community School of Performing and Fine Arts choir and trumpeter Terence Blanchard, who also performs My Funny Valentine in honor of Tyson's tradition of honoring her late husband Miles Davis by visiting a jazz club every year on his birthday. 5. Yo-Yo Ma makes Seiji Ozawa cry. It is the conductor's turn to dry his eyes when Yo-Yo Ma performs Tchaikovsky's Andante Cantabile. At first it seems a strange choice to have a cellist honor the man who conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra for 29 years, but like Ozawa, who has been described as calligraphy in motion, Yo-Yo Ma brings a composer's work to life so fully that when the music he does stops, the silence feels empty. Conductor and violinist Itzhak Perlman and opera singer Renée Fleming speak to Ozawa's greatness, but it's the John Williams-narrated biopic video that will introduce many viewers to this man - who owes his career choice to breaking two fingers while playing rugby when he was a 14-year-old aspiring piano virtuoso. The 38th Annual Kennedy Center Honors airs December 29 at 9 p.m. .m ET on CBS. The 2015 Kennedy Center Honors special will be aired on CBS tonight, so let's take a moment to sum up who will appear to pay tribute to the stars! The honorees this year are Star Wars creator George Lucas, EGOT winner and actress Rita Moreno, legendary actress Cicely Tyson, singer-songwriter Carole King, and famed conductor Seiji Ozawa. You can expect some amazing performances from stars like Miranda Lambert, Sara Bareilles and Aretha Franklin, as well as tributes from Kerry Washington, Gina Rodriguez, Steven Spielberg, Viola Davis and more. Be sure to tune in for the special evening at 9/8c on CBS! Click inside for the list of Kennedy Center Honors artists and presenters... 2015 Kennedy Center Honors - Performers & Presenters Rita Moreno Tribute Gina Rodriguez - Spoken Tribute Rosie Perez and The Muppets' Animal - Fever Lin-Manuel Miranda - Spoken Tribute Karen Olivo - America from West Side Story George Lucas Tribute Carrie Fisher - Spoken Tribute Mellody Hobson - Tribute Spoken Steven Spielberg - Spoken Tribute Martin Scorsese - Spoken Tribute C-3, R2-D2 and Stormtroopers - Special guests Kennedy Center Honors Orchestra - Indiana Jones and Star Wars themes Special tribute to The Eagles Miranda Lambert - Cicely Tyson Tribute Tyler Perry - Spoken Tribute Viola Davis - Spoken Tribute Kerry Washington - Spoken Tribute CeCe Winans and Terrence Blanchard - Blessed Assurance Seiji Ozawa Tribute Itzhak Perlman - Spoken Tribute Renee Fleming - Spoken Tribute Yo-Yo Ma - Tchaikovsky's Andante Cantabile Carole King John Tribute Kerry - Spoken Tribute Cholina Kennedy and Scott J. Campbell from Broadway's Beautiful - So Far Away Paul Anthony Stewart - Spoken Tribute Janelle Monae - Will You Love Me Tomorrow and One Fine Day James Taylor - Up on the Roof Sara Bareilles - You've Got a Friend Aretha Franklin - Natural Woman Tribute Cast - I Feel the Earth Move image_gallery.single.controls.next In recent years, we offered a special photo gallery of the 50 greatest entertainers still waiting to be to be named to the Kennedy Center Several of those proposals have now been chosen, including country music superstar Reba McEntire plus pop star and Oscar-winning actress Cher in 2018 and two-time Oscar winner Sally Field and orchestra conductor Michael Tilson Thomas in 2019. And now we're giving our latest list of Kennedy Center Honors top 50 recommendations for 2020. Of course, only five of them can be chosen, but surely all are worthy. Tour our photo gallery of ranked from #1 to #50, including such belated people as Denzel Washington, Jessica Lange, Dick Van Dyke, Gladys Knight, Mick Jagger, Harrison Ford and many more. Each year, the selection committee selects five entertainment veterans from a range of fields – film, TELEVISION, popular music, theatre and art (dance, opera, classical music). Featured artists are almost always over 50 and generally are 60 and over. This year's recipients will hopefully be announced sometime in the summer. The all-star event is held every year in the nation's capital during the first weekend of December and then airs on CBS as a two-hour special near Christmas. Be sure to make your Emmy nominations predictions today so Hollywood insiders can see how their shows and artists are performing at our odds. You can keep changing your predictions as often as you like until just before the nominees are announced on July 28. And participate in the exciting debate about the 2020 Emmy Awards taking place right now with Hollywood insiders in our TV forums. Read more Gold Derby entertainment news. Sign up for Gold Derby's free newsletter with latest predictions During its first four decades, the annual Kennedy Center Honors event has distinguished itself as one of the best TELEVISION programs of every year as well as a highly coveted award for entertainers. Held in Washington, D.C., producers and officials select five artists to honor each December for the two-hour CBS show. Now let's look back at our selections as the 20 greatest performances in the program's history with this photo gallery. Our choices include a lively version of Proud Mary by Beyonce for Tina Turner in 2005, the rock group Heart Out Stairway to Heaven for Led Zeppelin in 2012, a cavalcade of comedy stars honoring Carol Burnett in 2003, and Aretha Franklin singing her classic song Natural Woman in honor of her writer Carole King in 2015.

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