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**AUGUST WILSON AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER PRESENTS
HIGHMARK BLUES & HERITAGE FESTIVAL
OCTOBER 3, 2020**

**ONE-DAY-ONLY LIVESTREAM CONCERT TO FEATURE
RHIANNON GIDDENS, TOSHI REAGON, REV. SHAWN AMOS,
CHRISTONE “KINGFISH” INGRAM & MORE**

Pittsburgh, PA – September 8, 2020 – The **August Wilson African American Cultural Center** (AWAACC) announced today the line-up for its third annual **Highmark Blues & Heritage Festival** (HBHF) on October 3, 2020, starting at 12:00 PM EST. The virtual event, curated by the AWAACC, will feature a line-up of award-winning musicians, including multiple GRAMMY Award-winning vocalist and musician **Rhiannon Giddens**; musician, vocalist, and composer **Toshi Reagon**; **Rev. Shawn Amos**; **Christone “Kingfish” Ingram**; go-go band **Rare Essence**; **New Breed Brass Band** with its unique New Orleans fusion; **Deva Mahal**; the **Curtis Brothers Quartet**; **Eugene Morgan’s Blues Stories**; and more. Created by AWAACC President and CEO Janis Burley Wilson, the festival celebrates the blues and honors the musical roots that continue to inspire today’s generations of artists, especially those who recognize the artists who came before them and have had significant influence on their music. The first-ever HBHF online will stream live on AWAACC’s [YouTube](#), [Facebook Live](#) and at blues.aacc-awc.org/.

“The Highmark Blues & Heritage Festival is about hope, roots, and the connections that music creates across races, neighborhoods, and beliefs, and as the blues inspired August Wilson, it continues to inspire listeners today and provides hope for tomorrow,” said AWAACC President and CEO **Janis Burley Wilson**. “I’m incredibly grateful to Highmark Health for their partnership and support as we launch this year’s online festival, enabling us to continue celebrating the blues, the artists who bring the music to life, and our dynamic community.”

“Events like the Highmark Blues & Heritage Festival are an important part of our city’s vibrant and diverse cultural fabric, and while we won’t be physically together celebrating our rich heritage this year, we look forward to getting together virtually,” said **Evan Frazier**, Senior Vice President of Community Affairs, Highmark Health.

The Center is committed to being a hub for the arts and culture of the African Diaspora and African American perspectives. AWAACC has worked diligently to adapt to the ever-changing cultural landscape since the COVID-19 pandemic began. After hosting a virtual Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival (PIJF) in June that received more than forty-thousand views, the Center decided to expand its dynamic online experiences with HBHF. AWAACC has also implemented other virtual programming including virtual gallery tours and the literary conversation series, Lit Fridays. More information about the Center and its programming is available at aacc-awc.org. The Highmark Blues & Heritage Festival is presented by Highmark

Blue Cross Blue Shield.

About Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield

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About August Wilson African American Cultural Center

The August Wilson African American Cultural Center is a non-profit multidisciplinary arts center located in Pittsburgh's cultural district that generates artistic, educational, and community initiatives that advance the legacy of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson. One of the largest cultural centers in the country focused exclusively on the African American experience and the celebration of Black culture and the African diaspora, the non-profit organization welcomes more than 80,000 visitors locally and nationally. Through year-round programming such as the annual Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival, Black Bottom Film Festival, AWCommunity Days, TRUTHSayers speaker series, and rotating art exhibits in its two galleries, the Center provides a platform for established and emerging artists of color whose work reflects the universal issues of identity that Wilson tackled and which still resonate today. Opening in 2021, the Center will continue to expand its commitment to August Wilson's legacy with August Wilson: A Writer's Landscape, the first-ever permanent exhibition dedicated to the life and work of August Wilson.

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