

## NYO Jazz 2023 Soloist: Dee Dee Bridgewater



---

Over the course of a multifaceted career spanning four decades, Grammy and Tony Award–winning jazz giant Dee Dee Bridgewater has ascended to the upper echelon of vocalists, putting her unique spin on standards and taking intrepid leaps of faith in re-envisioning jazz classics. Ever the fearless voyager, explorer, pioneer, and keeper of tradition, the three-time Grammy winner most recently won a Grammy for best jazz vocal album for *Eleanora Fagan (1915–1959): To Billie With Love From Dee Dee*.

Ms. Bridgewater's career has always bridged musical genres. She earned her first professional experience as a member of the legendary Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, and throughout the '70s, she performed with such jazz notables as Max Roach, Sonny Rollins, Dexter Gordon, and Dizzy Gillespie. After a foray into the pop world during the '80s, she relocated to Paris and turned her attention back to jazz. Ms. Bridgewater began self-producing with her 1993 album *Keeping Tradition* (Polydor/Verve) and created DDB Records in 2006 when she signed with the Universal Music Group as a producer (Ms. Bridgewater produces all her own albums). All but one in her series of critically acclaimed albums—including her double Grammy Award–winning tribute to Ella Fitzgerald, *Dear Ella*—have received Grammy nominations.

Ms. Bridgewater also pursued a parallel career in musical theater, winning a Tony Award for her role as Glinda in *The Wiz* in 1975. Her other theatrical credits include *Sophisticated Ladies*, *Black Ballad*, *Carmen*, *Cabaret*, and the off-Broadway and West End productions of *Lady Day*, for which she received a Laurence Olivier nomination for best actress in a musical.

As a goodwill ambassador to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Ms. Bridgewater continues to appeal for international solidarity to finance global grassroots projects in the fight against world hunger. In 2017, she received an NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship with honors bestowed at the Kennedy Center. She won an ASCAP Foundation Champion Award in 2017, was named a Doris Duke Artist in 2018, and was inducted into the Memphis Music Hall of Fame in 2019.