



Warmest holiday wishes to our Ellington Family! We hope this time of year finds you surrounded by loved ones, filled with joy and a sense of peace.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 11-13:

[Amahl & the Night Visitors/A Motown Christmas](#)

(Note: Dec. 13th, show's second half features Keeping the Legacy Alive: a performance by Show Choir Alumni)

December 18

[Student Recital](#)

[Literary Media Coffee House](#)

December 19

[Senior Variety Show](#)

January 15:

[Museum Studies Exhibit, Looking Back to Move Forward](#)

[Opening Exhibit](#)

[Chamber Orchestra Ensemble Concert](#)

January 16:

[Student Recital](#)



SAVE THE DATE!

Denyce Graves is performing at the Kennedy Center on February 25th, 2009, at a fundraiser benefiting The Duke Ellington School of the Arts!

For sponsorship and ticket information, contact The Ellington Fund at info@ellingtonarts.org.

For a more detailed and up-to-date calendar of events, please visit www.ellingtonschool.org or call the Box Office at 202.337.4825

DENYCE GRAVES KENNEDY CENTER PERFORMANCE BENEFITS ELLINGTON!



The passion Liv Violette feels toward the arts is palpable--which is why the Ellington Fund is delighted she's agreed to chair the Benefit Committee for its upcoming event, *Sophisticated Lady: An Evening With Denyce Graves*, which takes place Wednesday, February 25 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

"It's going to be a spectacular event," says Ms. Violette, who has always had a soft spot for the arts. "Of course, Ms. Graves is Ellington's most renowned alumna. For a star of this magnitude to perform to benefit the Ellington School is an incredible honor."

Ms. Graves's performance will be unique in that it strays from her usual opera performance-incorporating classical, jazz and pop, R&B, and spirituals-some performed with the school's award-winning Show Choir.

As the Benefit Chair, Ms. Violette is charged with raising funds for the school through sponsorship and ticket sales. "Ellington blows me away," she says. "The kids and teachers are exceptional-I can't think of anyone more deserving of our support."

With ten years of charity work experience, Ms. Violette understands the concerns posed by the growing economic crisis. But now is the most important time of all to pitch in. "The arts are always the first to go in tough financial times," she reflects. "But they make us step back and consider the human condition. One song can convey emotion that touches our hearts and moves us to action. In this case, the action entails supporting young, talented artists who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity for their amazing artistic training. And, in my opinion, that's money well spent."

The performance takes place at 8:00 p.m. and will be followed by a 9:30 VIP reception. Surprise someone you love with tickets--they're a wonderful holiday gift! Tickets will be available to the public Wednesday, December 17 through the Kennedy Center box office (202.467.4600) and through online ticket sales at <http://www.kennedy-center.org/tickets/>. We look forward to sharing a memorable evening with you!

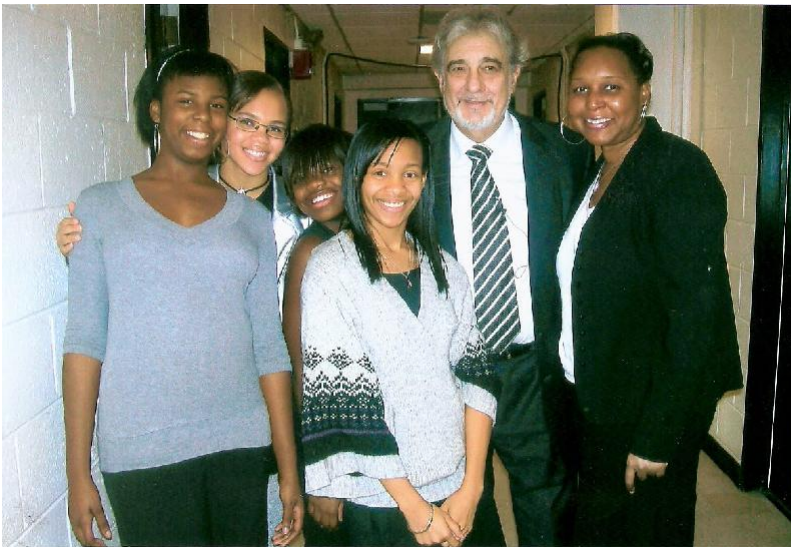
For sponsorship or VIP information, please call 202.333.1235 or email info@ellingtonarts.org.

Photo: Liv Violette

ELLINGTON HAS NEW CFC NUMBER

You only have until December 15 to remember The Duke Ellington School of the Arts as your designated Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) recipient-why not do it now? Please note Ellington's new number: **86177**.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



When Feld Entertainment decided to become a major Ellington sponsor, the Technical Design & Production (TDP) department seemed like a perfect fit. After all, as the producers of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Disney on Ice, and many other major shows, light, sound, set-design, and costumes are their area of expertise. And quickly, they identified a gap in Ellington's

curriculum: all these elements were taught except costuming. Immediately, a job description for a costuming instructor was posted, and soon thereafter, Beverly Johnson had packed her bags from Tampa, Florida, where she had been working at Patel Conservatory, and relocated to Washington, DC.

"I knew nothing about Ellington aside from its fabulous namesake," she says, "But when I researched the school and saw some of the incredible artists who had taught there, I was so excited."

Within her first year and a half, Ms. Johnson's classes have created costumes for Opera Workshop productions of *Lakmé*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Madame Butterfly*, traveled to Hawaii with the Show Choir, and fostered partnerships with prestigious Georgetown clothier Louis Everard and, perhaps most impressively, the Washington National Opera. Ms. Johnson's students have spent a day at rehearsal with Placido

Domingo and attended Ellington alumna Denyce Graves's piano rehearsals. They created two costumes for display at the Kennedy Center during Ms. Graves's performance as her signature role in Carmen. "No doubt this will be an ongoing relationship," says Ms. Johnson.

"Opera has been a wonderful opportunity for our students," she continues. "It's a whole other dimension of designing and musical theater-it's not just about Broadway."

With an emphasis on self-discipline, commitment, and creativity, Ms. Johnson's goal is to take students out of their comfort zones and broaden their horizons. "No matter where they end up," she says, "I want them to be able to approach life and people differently, with an open mind."

Her classes fly by, with students looking up in surprise when the bell rings. "They just want to stay-they're learning so much."

"Beverly is so immensely talented--she's amazing," says Ronald Lee Newman, TDP's department chair. "And she's provided a desperately needed missing link in our curriculum. Thanks to her, our kids are receiving a well-rounded education." And with thanks to Feld Entertainment, in Beverly Johnson, Ellington has found a very important teacher.

To learn how you can make a difference, please email info@ellingtonarts.org.

Photo: Beverly Johnson and students with Placido Domingo

NIKI WANNER: NEW ROLE AT ELLINGTON FUND



In an effort to work most effectively during tough economic times, Niki Wanner, formerly the Ellington Fund's Director of Institutional Giving, will now work as Deputy Executive Director. Her redefined role helps her better focus on individual donors. **If you're interested in meeting with Niki about your personal giving plan, she'd be delighted to talk with you. Please contact her at nwanner@ellingtonarts.org.**

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