

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF ELLNORA | THE GUITAR FESTIVAL



SEP
4-6

 KRANNERT CENTER

ELLNORA | 20

THE GUITAR FESTIVAL

FESTIVAL GUIDEBOOK

I



**COME
BE
MOVED**

I

 KRANNERT CENTER

ELLNORA

THE GUITAR FESTIVAL

2005



2025

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

OPENING NIGHT PARTY! FREE



SEP
4

GRACE BOWERS & THE HODGE PODGE

Rolling Stone has proclaimed 18-year-old Grace Bowers as "Nashville's new guitar hero." Fueled by the blues of B.B. King and the funk of Sly and the Family Stone, Bowers has risen from her first appearances playing on social media during the pandemic to one of the most in-demand guitarists of this generation. She's been on stage with Dolly Parton, The Allman-Betts Family Revival, and Slash, among many others, and made her debut at the Grand Ole Opry on her 18th birthday.

If you're concerned about the future of roots rock guitar, come see Grace Bowers; you will leave with a grin on your face and your faith restored.

TIME: 5:30PM | **VENUE:** STAGE 5 | **FREE**



SEP
4

MAREL HIDALGO QUARTET

Seventeen-year-old guitarist Marel Hidalgo has taken the east coast jazz scene by storm. Influenced by the great Pat Martino and Joe Pass, Hidalgo has led his ensembles through a dazzling array of straight-ahead, bop and Caribbean-influenced arrangements. This rising star's show is a celebration of the great Jamaican guitarist Ernest Ranglin and the Jamaican Jazz Songbook. Come see Marel Hidalgo in his first performance in Illinois.

TIME: 6:30PM | **VENUE:** STAGE 6 | **FREE**



SEP
4

BERTHA: GRATEFUL DRAG

Hey Now, Deadheads! Make no mistake: Nashville-based BERTHA: Grateful Drag is no gimmick; they have spent a little time on the mountain and are devoted scholars of the repertoire. They deliver nuanced playing with superb harmonies and exquisite improvisational jams that put them in the upper echelons of Grateful Dead tribute acts. Help's on the way when BERTHA: Grateful Drag takes the stage at ELLNORA!

TIME: 7:30PM | **VENUE:** AMPHITHEATRE | **FREE**



SEP
4

THE MESSTHETICS AND JAMES BRANDON LEWIS

The Messthetics are an instrumental trio from Washington, DC, featuring Fugazi's rhythm section—Joe Lally (bass) and Brendan Canty (drums)—with guitarist Anthony Pirog. Since forming in 2018, they've toured widely and released two albums on Dischord Records. In 2023, they joined forces with saxophonist James Brandon Lewis for an album on Impulse Records. Their live shows remain fiery, spontaneous, and a testament to their dedication to the performance experience.

TIME: 8:30PM | **VENUE:** STAGE 6 | **FREE**



SEP
5

JACKIE VENSON

Heralded as one of “Austin’s rising stars” by Rolling Stone, Jackie Venson has established herself as one of the most commanding performers to come out of Texas. An Austin native, Venson has shared the stage with icons like Gary Clark Jr., Melissa Etheridge, and Alanis Morissette. From Texas blues-focused albums such as *Love Transcends* to the eclectic electro-funk and rock of *Ghost in The Machine*, Venson’s artistry is only going to continue to grow.

TIME: 5PM | VENUE: STAGE 5 | FREE



SEP
5

LOUIS CATO

Grammy-nominated multi-instrumentalist Louis Cato leads the house band on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. He has an undeniable ability to craft sonic landscapes into timeless masterpieces and has worked with an array of artists including Bobby McFerrin, Snarky Puppy, Jon Batiste, Q-Tip, and A Tribe Called Quest. His latest single, ‘Black Man Blues’, was released in June 2025. See Cato and his band at work at ELLNORA this September!

TIME: 6PM | VENUE: STAGE 6 | FREE



SEP
5

DANIEL CASARES & COMPANY

Spanish guitarist and composer Daniel Casares holds an esteemed position in the world of elite flamenco artistry. As a youngster with natural-born skills for his instrument, Casares developed the creative abilities and virtuosity that have made him one of the most recognizable figures of flamenco today. Casares has received a growing list of accolades, including the Latin Music Critics Association's Award in New York and the Musical Revelation Award.

TIME: 7:30PM | **VENUE:** COLWELL PLAYHOUSE
TICKETS: ADV \$60 | ST \$25 | SC \$20 | STU \$15 | UI & YTH \$10



SEP
5

SAMANTHA FISH

One of the most formidable guitarists of her generation, Samantha Fish brings unmatched power and emotionality to her music. A Grammy nominee and Billboard Blues Chart-topper, she's toured with The Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, and Slash. Her latest release, *Paper Doll*, features nine powerhouse songs balancing catharsis, boldness, and vulnerability—the sound of an artist unapologetically coming into her own.

TIME: 9:30PM | **VENUE:** TRYON FESTIVAL THEATRE
TICKETS: ADV \$70 | ST \$35 | SC \$30 | STU \$15 | UI & YTH \$10



SEP
6

STRINGS FOR PEACE

With each ELLNORA performance, the incomparable Sharon Isbin reveals the depth of her curiosity and the versatility of her instrument and artistry. Strings for Peace, a collaboration between sarod master Amjad Ali Khan and Grammy-winning guitarist Isbin, takes listeners on “a remarkable spiritual and emotional journey” says *Rolling Stone*. Individually celebrated for their wide-ranging tastes, creative spirits, and virtuosity, Khan and Isbin—along with Khan’s brilliant sons, Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash, and the dazzling tabla player Amit Kavthekar—interweave the distinctive worlds of Spanish guitar and Indian ragas to make an eloquent call for harmony across cultures.

TIME: 2PM VENUE: FOELLINGER GREAT HALL
TICKETS: ADV \$70 | ST \$35 | SC \$30 | STU \$15 | UI & YTH \$10

SEP
6

JJJI

JJJI covers a staggering amount of sonic territory in her playing. Praised for her mesmerizing performances, JJJI is an adventurous guitarist known for her virtuosity and command of diverse repertoire. Equally at home with both acoustic and electric guitar, her concert programs range from traditional and contemporary classical to free improvisation. In 2021, the *Washington Post* selected JJJI as “one of the 21 composers/performers who sound like tomorrow.”

TIME: 4PM | VENUE: STAGE 5 | FREE



SEP
6

JOHN SCOFIELD & DAVE HOLLAND DUO

Both recognized without dispute as one of the finest jazz interpreters on his instrument, guitarist John Scofield and bassist Dave Holland join forces. These longtime colleagues bring their diverse musical backgrounds and infinite talents to the stage, each contributing original compositions and putting their stamp on a selection of jazz standards as well. Those familiar with their individual artistry can expect nothing less than a unique and compelling meeting of their musical minds—virtuosity, enjoyment, and depth.

TIME: 5PM | **VENUE:** STAGE 5 | **FREE**



SEP
6

ROSANNE CASH



“One of the most ambitious and literary songwriters of her generation” (*Rolling Stone*), Rosanne Cash is America’s foremost musical woman of letters, a literate and incisive artist whose poignant and distinctive vocals turn every song into a revelatory tale. A singular artist at the peak of her interpretive powers, Cash has earned four Grammy awards and 12 nominations. Among many other accolades, in 2021 she became the first woman to receive the Edward MacDowell award for music composition, and in 2024 she was elected as an Honorary American member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

TIME: 6:30PM **VENUE:** COLWELL PLAYHOUSE

TICKETS: ADV \$80 | ST \$45 | SC \$40 | STU \$15 | UI & YTH \$10



SEP
6

JEFF TWEEDY

Jeff Tweedy, founding member and frontman of Wilco, is one of contemporary music's most respected songwriters and performers. In addition to 13 Wilco albums, he has released four solo albums and authored three New York Times bestsellers. In anticipation of his fifth studio release, *Twilight Override* (out Sep 26), this solo tour offers fans a rare chance to experience songs from Tweedy's expansive catalog in a more intimate setting—spanning both his solo work and Wilco favorites.

TIME: 8PM VENUE: FOELLINGER GREAT HALL

TICKETS: ADV \$80 | ST \$45 | SC \$40 | STU \$15 | UI & YTH \$10



SEP
6

GARY CLARK JR.

Acclaimed guitarist and singer Gary Clark Jr. defies genre boundaries with his fusion of rock, blues, soul, and hip-hop. Winner of four Grammys, including Best Rock Performance and Best Rock Song for his hit single "This Land," Clark has collaborated with artists including Stevie Wonder, Alicia Keys, Nas, Sheryl Crow, Eric Clapton, and more. About his fourth album, *JPEG RAW* (Warner Bros, 2024), *Roots Music Magazine* writes: "This album is a lot of things: experimental, raw, polished, thought-provoking, mind-easing . . . a triumph of the musical spirit."

TIME: 9:30PM VENUE: TRYON FESTIVAL THEATRE




TICKETS: ADV \$90 | ST \$50 | SC \$45 | STU \$15 | UI & YTH \$10








FROM THIS SINGLE
INSTRUMENT,
ENTIRE UNIVERSES
HAVE BEEN BUILT

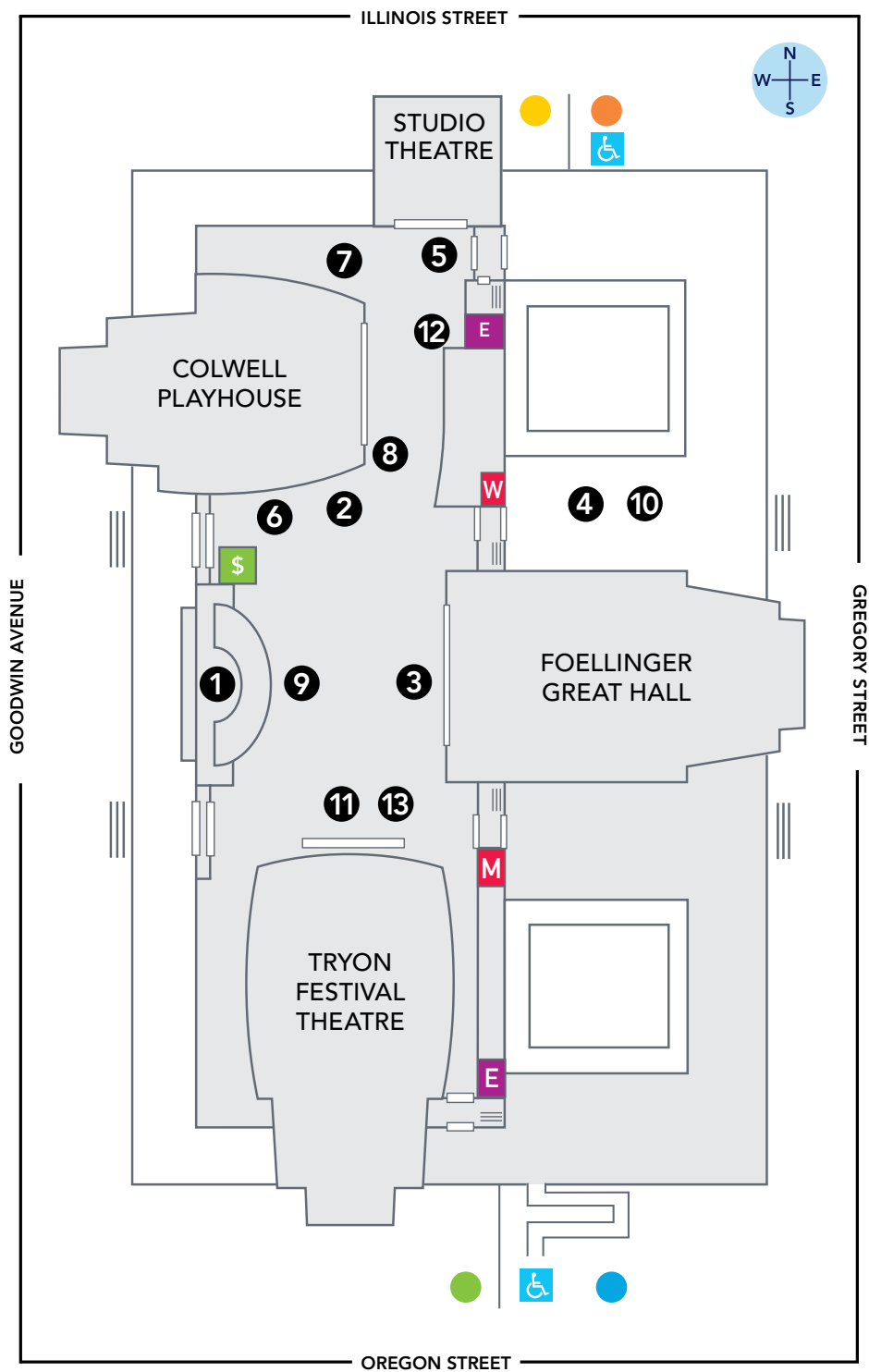
 KRANNERT CENTER
ELLNORA | 20
THE GUITAR FESTIVAL

FESTIVAL MAP

- ❶ AMPHITHEATRE
- ❷ STAGE 5
- ❸ STAGE 6 (Opening Night and Friday)
- ❹ GLOWZONE
- ❺ CRAFTING AREA | PRISM STUDIOS
- ❻ STAGE 5 BAR
- ❼ INTERMEZZO CAFE
- ❽ MERCH
- ❾ TICKET OFFICE + PATRON SERVICES
- ❿ FACE PAINTING (Opening Night Only)
- ⓫ MICHAELS' CATERING (Opening Night Only)
- ⓬ PHOTOBOOTH (Opening Night Only)
- ⓭ SATELLITE BAR
-  ATM
-  RESTROOMS
-  ELEVATORS

Parking Garages:

-  ORANGE PARKING
-  YELLOW PARKING
-  BLUE PARKING
-  GREEN PARKING
-  ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE



SCHEDULE

KRANNERT CENTER
ELLNORA | 20
THE GUITAR FESTIVAL
3 DAYS | SEP 4-6

TH SEP 4
OPENING NIGHT PARTY / FREE

5:30PM	GRACE BOWERS AND THE HODGE PODGE	Stage 5 (FREE)
6:30PM	MAREL HIDALGO QUARTET	Stage 6 (FREE)
7:30PM	BERTHA: GRATEFUL DRAG	Amphitheatre (FREE)
8:30PM	THE MESSTHETICS AND JAMES BRANDON LEWIS	Stage 6 (FREE)

**OPENING
NIGHT
PARTY !**
FREE

Opening Night Party
coincides with the 20th
anniversary of our biennial
ELLNORA Guitar Festival,
which promises a high-
energy, family-friendly
festival atmosphere with
food, fun, and lots of FREE
MUSIC all night long!

MUSIC • FOOD • DRINK •
FAMILY ACTIVITIES • FREE
PERFORMANCES!

LET US LEAD YOU ON MORE MUSICAL ADVENTURES

ELLNORA The Guitar Festival continues to move you inward and outward at the same time, all without leaving Champaign-Urbana.

FR SEP 5

5:00PM	JACKIE VENSON	Stage 5 (FREE)
6:00PM	LOUIS CATO	Stage 6 (FREE)
7:30PM	DANIEL CASARES & COMPANY	Colwell Playhouse
9:30PM	SAMANTHA FISH	Tryon Festival Theatre

SA SEP 6

2:00PM	STRINGS FOR PEACE	Foellinger Great Hall
4:00PM	JIJI	Stage 5 (FREE)
5:00PM	JOHN SCOFIELD & DAVE HOLLAND DUO	Stage 5 (FREE)
6:30PM	ROSANNE CASH	Colwell Playhouse
8:00PM	JEFF TWEEDY	Foellinger Great Hall
9:30PM	GARY CLARK JR.	Tryon Festival Theatre

SCHEDULE

FOOD & DRINK



FOOD

MICHAEL'S CATERING

Need to nosh? Michael's Catering will have delicious food options available onsite Thursday, September 4.

INTERMEZZO CAFÉ

Our world-famous Intermezzo café will be open Thursday through Saturday. Intermezzo hours are: TH 4-10pm | FR 4-9:30pm | SA 1-9:30pm



DRINK

STAGE 5 BAR

Our Stage 5 Bar will be open serving a variety of beverages, including cans of ELLNORA Gold beer, locally brewed by our friends at Triptych Brewing.

STAGE 5 BAR HOURS:

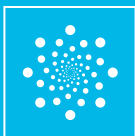
TH SEP 4 | 4:30-10:15pm (last call)

FR SEP 5 | 4-9:30pm (last call or intermission of last show, whatever is later)

SA SEP 6 | 3:00-9:30pm (last call or intermission of last show, whatever is later)

TRIPTYCH BREWING

Partnerships produce great things such as music and beer. Behold ELLNORA GOLD...a full flavored ale with the perfect balance of malts and hops, available at Stage 5 bar.



TO DO

GLOW ZONE

Lose yourself in the Glow Zone, a glow-in-the-dark playground with illuminated swing sets and see-saws for all ages. Big fun when the sun goes down!

FACE PAINTING

Show your colors with face painting by Expressions Body Art and Design.

PRISM STUDIOS

Prism Studios will be on site with guided activity for all ages.

PHOTO BOOTH

Grab your friends and loved ones for some snaps at our Opening Night photo booth, courtesy of Liv and Joy.

ACTIVITIES

SERVICES

Customize your ELLNORA volume settings—**EARPLUGS** are available in front of each theatre and at the Patron Services desk. Earplugs and cough drops are also available from any usher.

RESTROOMS are located at the east entrances on the Lobby level and in the foyers of Foellinger Great Hall, Tryon Festival Theatre, and Colwell Playhouse; all-gender restrooms are located in each elevator lobby on Level 1 and Level 3. Lobby restrooms and one restroom in each elevator lobby are fully accessible and contain baby-changing stations.

PARKING in the Krannert Center underground garages is free in the evenings after 5pm and all day on weekends. All four parking garages provide elevator access to every level of the Center. Krannert Center's parking garages can be accessed from the north side off Illinois Street or the south side off Oregon Street.

If you are in need of **LOST AND FOUND**, please visit the Ticket Office counter in the Lobby. We will do our best to reunite object and owner!

IF YOU FIND IN ADVANCE YOU CAN'T ATTEND A PERFORMANCE, contact the Ticket Office by 6pm the day before the performance at 217.333.6280. We never charge a handling fee on ticket transactions.

PHONES AND DEVICES: The use of cellphones, cameras, and recording devices during performances is prohibited unless otherwise announced from the stage.

SERVICES

Krannert Center is committed to **ACCESSIBILITY** for all patrons, and we are delighted to provide a number of service to assist you. Every theatre in the Center has designated wheelchair-accessible seating and companion seating as well as “easy access” seats that require few or no stairs to reach. Krannert Center also offers an assisted listening system in all four theatres and the Lobby, and headsets are available to check out free of charge at the Patron Services desk. Large-print and Braille programs and American Sign Language interpreters are available with two weeks’ advance notice. For assistance regarding your visit, please contact Patron Services by email at patronservices@krannertcenter.com or by phone at 217.333.9716.

Krannert Center’s **INTERMEZZO CAFE**, located in the Lobby, offers a wide selection of coffees and teas, soups, sandwiches, and snacks, crafted to perfection by Chef Amy Thomas and her team. Intermezzo is open during ELLNORA Thursday-Saturday, September 4-6.

STAGE 5 BAR offers a variety of excellent cocktails, wine, beer, and non-alcoholic beverages, and proudly features Triptych Brewing’s ELLNORA Gold crafted especially for this year’s festival.

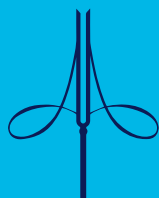
STAGE 5 BAR HOURS:

TH SEP 4 | 4:30-10:15pm (last call)

FR SEP 5 | 4-9:30pm (last call or intermission of last show, whatever is later)

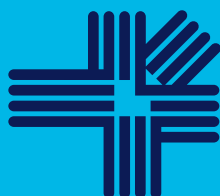
SA SEP 6 | 3:00-9:30pm (last call or intermission of last show, whatever is later)

GOOD THINGS HAPPEN WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT.



the Augustine
Foundation

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Augustine Foundation. Without their longtime financial support, Ellnora | The Guitar Festival would not be possible.



ELLNORA | THE GUITAR FESTIVAL SPONSORS

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KRANNERT CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts is dedicated to the advancement of education, research, and public engagement through the pursuit of excellence and innovation in the performing arts. Embracing the art of the past as well as the art of our time, the Center supports the belief that creativity is a core human characteristic and that the arts hold uniquely transformative potential. Through its multiple and integrated roles as classroom, laboratory, and public square, Krannert Center serves as a touchstone for the exploration and expansion of human experience.



come be moved.



Ellnora Krannert was an open-hearted woman with a vision: an inviting space where everyone was welcome and could naturally meet and merge by way of the arts. Her revolutionary philosophy was instrumental in the design of Krannert Center, and since 1969 that philosophy has been our guiding principle in bringing a global community together to share life-affirming experiences—including festivals packed with guitar goodness from around the planet.

Ellnora Krannert
had a vision for an inviting
space where everyone
was welcome.





EllnoraGuitarFestival.com



GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!
SCAN HERE OR GO TO
EllnoraGuitarFestival.com



 **krannert center**



**College of Fine
& Applied Arts**