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GUITAR CENTER MUSIC FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2027 MUSIC MATTERS AWARDS GALA HONORING JOHN LEGEND

The May 21 event will take place at the Fairmont Century Plaza in Beverly Hills, with tickets available now at https://guitarcenterfoundation.org/gala/

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif., Oct. 27, 2026 — The Guitar Center Music Foundation (GCMF) today announced the Music Matters Awards Gala taking place on May 21, 2027, at the Fairmont Century Plaza in Beverly Hills, honoring John Legend with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Tickets are now available for the evening, which will celebrate Legend's contributions to music, education, and philanthropy while raising funds to expand access to instruments and music education in communities nationwide.

The gala will bring together artists, industry leaders, educators and supporters to advance GCMF's mission to give everyone the power to create and express themselves through music. Proceeds will support instrument grants and music education programs for schools and nonprofit organizations nationwide. As part of his involvement, Legend will help provide instrument grants to a selected school or nonprofit.

"John Legend shares the Guitar Center Music Foundation's belief in the transformative power of music and music education," said Valeisha Butterfield, CEO and Executive Director of the Guitar Center Music Foundation. "We are honored to celebrate his extraordinary contributions and, together, create new opportunities for the next generation to discover, create and thrive."

An EGOT-winning, critically acclaimed, multiplatinum artist, John Legend has built a career defined by extraordinary artistry and a longstanding commitment to social impact. With 13 GRAMMY Awards, an Academy Award, a Golden Globe, a Tony Award and four Emmy Awards, Legend stands among a distinguished group of entertainers to achieve all four of the industry's most prestigious honors. Beyond the stage, Legend has championed educational equity, youth opportunity and community empowerment. In 2015, Legend founded FREEAMERICA to help end mass incarceration and reimagine public safety. In 2021, he launched HUMANLEVEL to invest in community-driven solutions and expand opportunities in historically underserved communities. Legend serves on the boards of Harlem Village Academies, Global Citizen and Management Leadership for Tomorrow, as well as the advisory boards of The Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice and Teach For All. In July 2025, he was named Philanthropist of the Year at The Hollywood Reporter's Annual Social Impact Summit in recognition of his ongoing commitment to social change.

“Music is one of the most profound forms of human expression, connecting communities and inspiring possibility,” said John Legend. “I’m deeply honored to be recognized by the Guitar Center Music Foundation and support its commitment to expanding access to music education for the next generation.”

The May 21 gala will feature a red carpet, dinner, awards and special musical tributes celebrating Legend, along with performances by fellow artists and moments spotlighting music educators. Additional announcements in the coming months will reveal a second Lifetime Achievement Award honoree, the Chairman’s Award recipient, performers, presenters and one-of-a-kind silent auction items.

“At the heart of the Guitar Center Music Foundation is our mission to give everyone the power to create and express themselves through music,” said Curtis Heath, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Guitar Center Music Foundation. “That mission extends beyond providing instruments. Through the Music Matters Awards gala, we’re raising funds to remove barriers, expand opportunity and ensure the transformative power of music reaches those who need it most.”

The 2027 gala builds on GCMF’s work expanding the reach and impact of music nationwide. In 2025 alone, the Foundation impacted more than 15,000 people, supported 141 programs, served 700 Los Angeles wildfire survivors, and reached communities across 39 states.

Tickets for the 2027 Music Matters Awards Gala are available now at https://guitarcenterfoundation.org/gala/.

Guitar Center Music Foundation:
For some, music may be just a hobby. But for others, music serves as a crucial lifeline – a path to healing, an opportunity to nurture untapped talent, an escape from the grim realities of everyday life, a break from generational trauma, or the start of a social revolution. The Guitar Center Music Foundation (GCMF) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to the healing, transformative power of music. Thousands of individuals nationwide benefit yearly from GCMF’s grants and other efforts aiding veterans, hospital patients, the unhoused, and those affected by natural disasters, as well as youth in both schools and after-school programs. By providing these programs with all types of instruments and advocating for the benefits of music education, GCMF furthers its mission of giving people the chance to create and express themselves through music. For more information about The Guitar Center Music Foundation, please visit http://guitarcenterfoundation.org/.

Guitar Center:
Guitar Center is the leading retailer of musical instruments, lessons, repairs and rentals in the U.S. With more than 300 stores nationwide and one of the top direct sales websites in the industry, Guitar Center has helped people make music for more than 60 years. Guitar Center

provides a range of musician-based services, including Guitar Center Lessons for players of all ages and skill levels, GC Repairs, an on-site maintenance and repair service, and GC Rentals, offering easy access to instruments and gear. Guitar Center's family of brands includes Music & Arts, which operates more than 250 stores specializing in band and orchestral instruments for sale and rental, serving teachers, band directors, college professors, parents and students, and Musician's Friend, a leading direct marketer of musical instruments in the United States. Guitar Center Business Solutions is the company's commercial division, delivering professional audio, video, lighting and integrated technology solutions for businesses, institutions and creators nationwide through a portfolio of brands including AVDG (Audio Visual Design Group), GC Pro and Custom House at Guitar Center. The Guitar Center Music Foundation is a national nonprofit that expands access to music through instrument donations and support for communities in need.

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