

ACLU Concert Raises 300 Thousand

Written by Westside ID154

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American Civil Liberties Union concert celebrity performances (feat. Patti Smith, Eddie Brickell, Lou Reed...) raise more than \$300,000 for the ACLU. ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero and ACLU President Nadine Strossen hosted a star-studded lineup of the country's hottest actors, artists and musicians as they took the stage Monday evening to entertain a packed house at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center for the ACLU Freedom Concert, a benefit for the American Civil Liberties Union, which raised more than \$300,000.

Produced by composer Philip Glass, the evening featured an eclectic range of music and spoken word performances, by Mos Def, Robin Williams, Paul Simon, Richard Gere, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Jake Gyllenhaal, Richard Belzer, Wyclef Jean, Patti Smith, Paul Simon, Lou Reed, Lila Downs, Jessica Lange, Philip Glass, Tony Kushner, Sarah Jones, Nanci Griffith, Edie Brickell and The Black Keys.

Paul Simon kicked off the evening's extraordinary lineup of musical performances with classic favorites "America" and "Love Me Like A Rock" and was joined by gospel group the Dixie Hummingbirds. Lou Reed also played his signature "Walk on the Wild Side," and Wyclef Jean had the crowd on their feet during a tribute to Jimi Hendrix featuring the "Star Spangled Banner," the show's finale.

Actors including Robin Williams, Jessica Lange, Richard Gere, Tony Kushner, Sarah Jones, Jake Gyllenhaal and Maggie Gyllenhaal performed creative monologues and sketches on landmark U.S. Supreme Court cases that have affected civil liberties. In his own unique style, Robin Williams gave a hilarious and thoughtful performance as he read excerpts from the 2003 "Lawrence v. Texas" decision striking down a state sodomy law. Jessica Lange delivered a moving monologue on the 1973 "Roe v. Wade" ruling on abortion, while Tony Kushner performed a sketch with Maggie Gyllenhaal as Sandra Day O'Connor about the Court's rulings on affirmative action.

"The ACLU is proud to have the support of such great artists who are willing -- and in this time of censorship, brave enough -- to donate their time to celebrate our freedom of expression," said ACLU Executive Director Anthony D. Romero. "As Americans, we all have the right, and the obligation, not to remain silent when our liberties are threatened."

Following the performance in New York City, performers and celebrity attendees headed to the

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Mandarin Oriental Hotel for the VIP After Party.

The ACLU is othe nation's guardian of liberty, working daily in courts, legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and laws of the United States guarantee everyone in this country. The ACLU is non-partisan. Membership has grown from a roomful of civil liberties activists at its founding in 1920 to an organization of more than 400,000 members and supporters, with local offices that cover every state in the nation.

Source: [NoteBlogs](#)