

Saturday
NOV 22
7:30 pm

PEABO BRYSON

The Golden Touch Tour



Grammy- and
Oscar-winning
legendary vocalist



This event is made possible through the generous support of Dean and Marjean Sparling Werries and the Frances Wright Strickland Programming Fund.

Sponsored by

**Dr. Jim & Vickie
OTTEN**

Dr. Jim and Vickie Otten are pleased to partner with the Lied Center to bring life-enriching performing arts experiences and world-class artists, like the legendary Peabo Bryson, to our community. Enjoy tonight's performance!



*Expect rock-concert sound levels at this performance.
To accommodate individual listening needs, ear plugs are available
at the Audience Services Desk in the lobby before and during the show.*

There will be no intermission during this performance.

Peabo Bryson has established a career as one of the premier male vocalists in modern music. Possessing a beautifully rich, almost operatic voice, this two-time Academy Award-winner and two-time Grammy Award-winner has prospered despite the passage of time and changes in popular musical trends. With 20 albums to his credit, Bryson has enjoyed an unprecedented, across-the-board level of international success. He has the distinction of being the first artist in music history to have separate records topping four different charts.

Acclaim and recognition are nothing new for this multi-talented singer, songwriter and producer. Born April 13, 1951, in Greenville, SC, Bryson spent much of his childhood on his grandfather's farm in Maudlin, SC. "I was taught to work and work hard!"

His family not only instilled in him his work ethic but a love for music as well.

"My mother was a serious music lover. Whenever there was somebody great in town, she'd drag us along to catch their act. I have seen most of the greats of that period—Sam Cooke, Little Richard and even Billie Holiday. Sam Cooke was a great influence on me. His voice had a pure quality—straight from the heart."

"I think the sensitivity in my songs stems from my early childhood. I was raised by women—my grandmother, until she died, and my mother. My grandmother was a woman who lived and loved with incredible passion."

THE EARLY YEARS

Bryson began singing at age 14 as a star of the traveling revue Al Freeman & The Upsetters. Two years later, in 1968, he left home to tour the now-famous Southern "chitlin' circuit" with another local band, Moses Dillard and the Tex-Town Display, gaining the experience that would help prepare him for a solid career as a recording artist and entertainer.

Bryson's first break came during a recording session at Atlanta's Bullet/Bang Records. The young singer caught the ear of the label's then general manager, Eddie Biscoe. Biscoe signed Bryson to a contract as a writer, producer and arranger, and encouraged him to perform his own songs. For several years, he worked with hometown bands and wrote and produced for Bang. In 1976, he released his debut LP, *Peabo*. The project featured Bryson composing nearly all of the songs (some with the great Thom Bell), a young Luther Vandross among the background vocalists and film star Tamara "Cleopatra Jones" Dobson showing him love on the back jacket.

REACHING FOR THE SKY

Bryson moved to Capitol Records in 1978, where his album *Reaching for the Sky* went Gold, and the title track was a number six R&B hit. With his LP *Crosswinds* (Gold, 1978), he truly penetrated the hearts of soul fans everywhere with the title tracks "Feel the Fire" and "I'm So Into You," which spent two weeks as the nation's number two R&B hit. He was paired with Capitol label-mate Natalie Cole for the 1979 project "We're the Best of Friends," and a year later with Roberta Flack for the

double-LP *Live & More* (on Atlantic Records). Bryson delivered four more albums for Capitol before making a second, even bigger album with Flack titled *Born to Love*, a gold seller that featured the smash “Tonight I Celebrate My Love” (Top 5 R&B and #16 Pop). That led him to sign a deal with Elektra Records for four albums, the second of which, *Take No Prisoners*, featured the crossover smash “If Ever You’re in My Arms Again” (Top 10 Pop and Top 10 R&B).

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

“With youthful good looks and a relaxed, almost conversational vocal style,” wrote Mike Kirkeby of *Rolling Stone*, “Bryson is, unabashedly, a romantic balladeer, wooing female listeners much as R&B idols did in the fifties, but in a reverent, subtle way.”

With each move in his career, applause for Bryson became louder. *New York Times* music critic Jon Pareles called Bryson the “Pavarotti of soul singers.” His duets with Natalie Cole (“What You Won’t Do for Love”) and Roberta Flack (“Tonight, I Celebrate My Love”) a Top 15 Pop smash, had earned Bryson the tag “King of Balladeers.” With “If Ever You’re in My Arms Again,” which landed in the number 10 spot on the pop charts, he scored another crossover hit and solidified his mainstream audience. Both “Tonight...” and “If...” went to #1 on the adult contemporary charts. A return to Capitol in 1989 for the album *All My Love* earned him his first R&B #1 single with a remake of the late Al Wilson’s “Show & Tell” (a song he proudly keeps the torch lit for in all his shows). He hit the R&B chart-top a second time with the smash “Can You Stop the Rain,” the title track of his R&B chart-topping first of two albums for Columbia Records. The single won Bryson a 1991 Grammy nomination for Best Male R&B Vocal Performance, as did “Lost in the Night” in 1992.

But it was two songs for Disney animated films which gave Bryson true crossover appeal. The first was 1991’s “Beauty and the Beast” with international pop singer Celine Dion. The song was a Billboard #1 hit. The very next year, he struck gold again with “A Whole New World” from Disney’s *Aladdin*. The iconic hit is a duet with R&B and gospel vocalist Regina Belle. Both “Beauty and the Beast” (1991) and “A Whole New World” (1992) also won Oscars for Best Song. Since these milestones, Bryson has been even more sought after as a guest vocalist and duet partner, resulting in his collaborations with Tony Award-winner Lea Salonga on “We Kiss in the Shadows” (#1 on the Classical Crossover Chart from a new recording of *The King and I* score), Melissa Manchester’s “Lovers After All,” and Kenny G’s “By The Time This Night is Over” (from the chart-topping contemporary jazz CD *Breathless*), which enjoyed a three-month run on the Hot 100 in 1993. In June of 1993, Bryson sold out seven consecutive shows at Radio City Music Hall.

Demonstrating his skills as an actor, Bryson appeared in the lead role for the touring production of the Tony Award-winning *Raisin* (based on *Raisin in the Sun*) and in the role of The Wizard in a touring company of *The Wiz*. In 1998, he appeared in the Michigan Opera Theater’s 100th-anniversary production of Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* and also recorded two songs for the *Barney* movie soundtrack, one of which, the Bryson-produced “DREAMS,” became the lead song for the album. He also released three Christmas CDs, lovingly filled with music he has performed for years in the annual touring holiday music extravaganza *The Colors of Christmas*.

In 2005, Bryson released *Live In Concert: Ladies' Request*, in association with *Time Life*, for whom he has been the spokesman for their soul retrospective collection. *Live In Concert* is an excellent collection that covers many of his biggest hits and shows that his voice is still as strong and smooth as ever. To date, it has sold over 3 million copies. He followed this in early 2006 with *The Very Best of Peabo Bryson*, a compilation of his biggest hits recorded on multiple record labels.

LATEST PROJECTS

For *Stand For Love*, the 25th album of Bryson's career, the crooner continued to do what he does best: showcase the broad palette of his skills. The record, produced by legends Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, is a timeless mix of pop and soul. Bryson is now working on his next record with Jimmy and Terry as well as a biography for release next year.

In 2025, Bryson celebrates fifty years in Europe. The tour will cover over 80 concerts throughout the year, across North America, Europe and Africa. Peabo Bryson is both an iconic vocalist and a true gentleman. His career has many more chapters to come.