

# Mammoth Cave

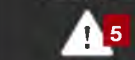
National Park  
Kentucky

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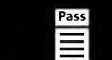
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## Mammoth Cave Presents Teddy Abrams Louisville Orchestra with Yo-Yo Ma



Rafinesque Hall inside Mammoth Cave National Park will be the location of a special musical performance by Teddy Abrams and the Louisville Orchestra with Special Guest Yo-Yo Ma in April 2023.  
*NPS Photo.*

Mammoth Cave National Park Presents Teddy Abrams and the Louisville Orchestra with Special Guest Yo-Yo Ma is a special music event coordinated by Mammoth Cave National Park and Louisville Orchestra. The performances will take place on April 29, 2023 and feature world renowned cellist [Yo-Yo Ma](#), members of the [Louisville Orchestra](#) and the [Louisville Chamber Choir](#) and acclaimed Musical Director of the Louisville Orchestra, [Teddy Abrams](#).

### Inspiration for Music

Music has been an important part of Mammoth Cave's over 200-year modern history with classical musicians, choirs, and contemporary artists composing and often performing their music inside the cave. Performances have been conducted by individuals and groups who capitalize on the natural acoustics of the large and spacious cave passageways. American conductor, Teddy Abrams, reached out to park officials on behalf of the Louisville Orchestra in late 2021 with an idea to connect culture and music to our national public lands. The partnership between the park and the Louisville Orchestra celebrates how the grandeur and fascination of our natural environments, like caves, can inspire creativity for the artistic world.

The music performed during this special event is being created especially for Mammoth Cave by American composer, Teddy Abrams. Abrams spent the last year exploring Mammoth Cave National Park and immersing himself into the cave's geology and human history to gain inspiration from the sights and sounds of the park. He composed his work with featured performer, Yo-Yo Ma, in mind.



The annual Cave Sing event at Rafinesque Hall in December 2022.  
*NPS Photo*

### The Performance Area

The performance area inside Mammoth Cave is a large open area known as Rafinesque Hall, where the park's annual [Cave Sing](#) event is held each December. This music event will not be like your normal concert performance, though. The audience will be asked to participate and move around the performance space at various points during the piece.

The standing surface in Rafinesque Hall is smooth but uneven. The cave is a natural environment, with low lighting and a temperature of around 54°F (12°C). There are no seating options, and the performance time is estimated at 45 min – 1 hour.

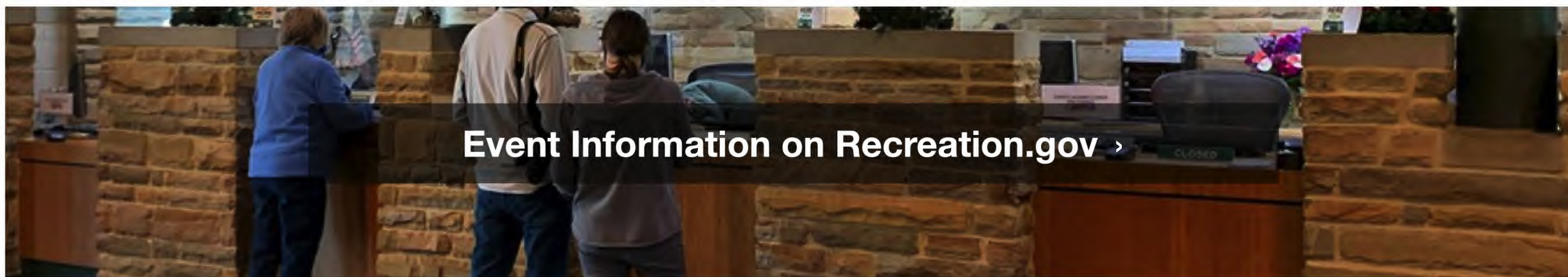
Audience members must walk 0.75 miles (1.2 km), round trip, to reach the performance area. The trail includes a steep outdoor hillside to and from the cave's natural entrance and a total of 130 stairs. Inside the cave, the trail travels along broad walkways in some of the largest rooms inside Mammoth Cave. The trail is mostly level, but some hilly and uneven areas exist.



## Tickets

Event tickets were distributed via a lottery system through [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) to provide an equitable opportunity for interested visitors attend this limited, yet high-demand event. There will be no tickets available at the park on the day of the event.

- The lottery was open from Monday, January 30 to Monday, February 6 through [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).
- Only one application per email address was accepted.
- Each application could request up to 4 tickets.
- The performance is open to all ages, but youth under the age of 16 years, must be accompanied by an adult 18 years or older.
- Applicants selected a primary choice for the performance time but might have been assigned tickets to either performance time depending on the overall ticket demand.
- All lottery applicants were charged a \$1.00 application fee, but there are no additional fees to attend the event.
- Tickets are not transferable. All commercial use is prohibited. There are no refunds, rain checks, or changes to the assigned performance time permitted. Lottery winners must present photo identification which matches the name of the lottery winner to validate tickets before entry into the event.
- Parking for the event will be located at the Mammoth Cave National Park Visitor Center. Ticket holders must present their tickets to access the parking lot. Due to the limited availability of parking spaces, all ticket holders are encouraged to arrive early and carpool to the park on the day of the event.



## Preparing for Your Visit

The park expects roadways and parking lots around the visitor center to be congested on the day of the musical event. Visitors should closely review event details prior to coming to the park and plan their trip accordingly.

While the cave is protected from severe weather and rain events, the performances may be cancelled if hazardous weather seems likely to create a safety concern for accessing the cave. Participants should be prepared for the possibility of inclement weather on the outdoor hillside that leads to the entrance of the cave and at the uncovered outdoor amphitheater during the live stream broadcast. Please check the [current weather](#) in the park area before your visit.

Cell phones, cameras, video recording equipment, flashlights, and headlamps are prohibited during the cave performances. Lights from these devices detract from the ambiance of the natural dark cave environment and causes distractions to the performers and other audience members.

No containers of any kind, including bags, backpacks, purses, etc. will be allowed inside the cave during the performance. Please leave them at home or locked in the trunk of your vehicle. A limited number of lockers are available for rent near the visitor center.

## The Performers



Yo-Yo Ma

*Image provided by the Louisville Orchestra and Yo-Yo Ma*

### Yo-Yo Ma

Cellist [Yo-Yo Ma](#)'s life and career are testament to his enduring belief in culture's power to generate trust and understanding. Whether performing new or familiar works from the cello repertoire, collaborating with communities and institutions to explore culture's role in society, or engaging unexpected musical forms, Yo-Yo strives to foster connections that stimulate the imagination and reinforce our humanity.

Yo-Yo Ma was born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris, where he began studying the cello with his father at age four. When he was seven, he moved with his family to New York City, where he continued his cello studies at the Juilliard School before pursuing a liberal arts education at Harvard.

Yo-Yo has recorded more than 100 albums, is the winner of 19 Grammy Awards, and has performed for nine American presidents, most recently on the occasion of President Biden's inauguration. He has received numerous awards, including the National Medal of the Arts, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the Birgit Nilsson Prize. He has been a UN Messenger of Peace since 2006 and was recognized as one of TIME magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2020.



## The Louisville Orchestra

Established in 1937 through the combined efforts of Louisville mayor Charles Farnsley and conductor Robert Whitney, the [Louisville Orchestra](#) is a cornerstone of the Louisville arts community. With the launch of First Edition Recordings in 1947, it became the first American orchestra to own a recording label. Six years later it received a Rockefeller grant of \$500,000 to commission, record, and premiere music by living composers, thereby earning a place on the international circuit. In 2001, the Louisville Orchestra received the Leonard Bernstein Award for Excellence in Educational Programming, presented annually to a North American orchestra. Continuing its commitment to new music, the Louisville Orchestra has earned 19 ASCAP awards for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music, and was also awarded large grants from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music and the National Endowment for the Arts, both for the purpose of producing, manufacturing and marketing its historic First Edition Recordings collections. Over the years, the orchestra has performed for prestigious events at the White House, Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and on tour in Mexico City, and their last two albums for the Decca Gold label, *All In* (2017) and *The Order of Nature* (2019) – the latter launched with an appearance on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* – both topped the Billboard Classical and Crossover charts. The feature-length, Gramophone Award-winning documentary *Music Makes a City* (2010) chronicles the Louisville Orchestra's founding years, and in spring 2018, [Teddy Abrams](#) and the orchestra were profiled on the popular television program *CBS Sunday Morning*.



Musical Director and American composer, Teddy Abrams, conducts the Louisville Orchestra  
Image provided by the Louisville Orchestra



Members of the Louisville Chamber Choir will perform at a special musical event inside Mammoth Cave in April 2023.

Photo courtesy of the Louisville Chamber Choir

## The Louisville Chamber Choir

Artistic Director Kent Hatteberg formed the [Louisville Chamber Choir](#) in the Fall of 2013. Comprised of musicians from the Louisville area and beyond, the choir aspires to the highest level of ensemble performance. The choir's performances encompass a wide range of composers, from Gabrieli and Byrd to Ešenvalds and Whitacre, in an effort to engage audiences through technical expertise and emotional expression. LCC is a frequent collaborator with Teddy Abrams and the Louisville Orchestra. Past collaborations include annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*, Nathaniel Dett's *The Ordering of Moses*, Mozart's Requiem, Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, Bernstein's *Mass* and *Chichester Psalms*, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, Mahler's Symphony No. 2, and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. LCC will join the LO once again on Leonard Bernstein's Symphony No. 3, "Kaddish" on March 4, 2023. This spring, the choir anticipates the release of a new album of recordings, *Sacred Revelations*.