

APOLLO

Apollo Theater Spring 2021 Programming

Virtual season highlights include
a celebration of the cult classic
HOUSE PARTY featuring

Kid ‘N Play, A.J. Johnson, Darryl “Chill” Mitchell,
Reginald Hudlin, with performances by
Kid ‘N Play, Full Force, Lisa Lisa, and DJ Wiz

Fifth annual WOW (Women of the World Festival)
presented in partnership with The WOW Foundation:
Black Women Transcending!
featuring more than 80 thoughtleaders,
scholars, artists and performers

The return of Apollo favorites including *Music Café*, *Comedy Club*,
Live Wire, Career Panels, ImageNation’s Cocktails & Sol Cinema and more

Harlem, NY – (Updated February 19, 2021; February 8, 2021) – The Apollo Theater today announced details of its spring 2021 season, which will take place exclusively online. The season features a broad range of free and ticketed virtual events, including the Apollo Film series celebration of *House Party* and *House Party 2*, cult classics created more than 30 years ago. The virtual program includes performances by Kid ‘N Play, Full Force and more. Additional highlights include Roc Nation’s *Infinity Song* at the *Apollo Muisic Café*; and the return of the bi-annual WOW (Women of the World) Festival featuring more than 80 thoughtleaders, scholars, and artists including, Aunjanue Ellis of HBO’s “Lovecraft Country”; *New York Times* best-selling author and co-host of CBS’ “The Talk” Elaine Welteroth; poet, writer, and activist Nikki Giovanni; and political and women’s rights activist Dr. Shola Mos-Shogbamimu; along with performances by Adeline, Dionne Farris, and many more.

The season expands the nonprofit theater’s role as a partner, commissioner, and co-producer of programming that centers Black artists and voices from the African Diaspora, while tackling important social issues for Harlem, New York, and the nation.

The Apollo Theater will kick off its 87th season on **Saturday, February 27 at 7:00pm EST** with **Apollo Film & Screen/Play Presents: 30 Years of House Party**. The evening will feature highlights from the musical and comedy cult classics *House Party* (1990) and *House Party 2* (1991), a conversation with the film’s key players, Christopher “Kid” Reid and Christopher “Play” Martin, who will also perform; A.J. Johnson; Darryl “Chill” Mitchell; writer and director Reginald Hudlin; producer Warrington Hudlin; DJ Cassidy; and other special guests, along with performances by legendary hip-hop and R&B group Full Force, Lisa Lisa, Today, and DJ Wiz. *House Party* was one of the first films to center the Black teenage

experience for a mainstream audience. Also featuring an array of hip-hop artists and now-iconic dance-offs, both films helped catapult Kid 'N Play to superstardom and continue to resonate across generations of audiences today.

“From our celebration of *House Party* and the return of the Women of the World Festival, to our educational and community events, the Apollo Theater’s 87th season will offer our audiences and artists numerous opportunities for connection, joy, and inspiration,” said **Apollo Theater Executive Producer Kamilah Forbes**. “We know how deeply important it is that the Apollo offer a safe space for our community to express themselves freely and to celebrate Black voices, and I’m thrilled that we are able to continue to bring audiences together on the Apollo Digital Stage as we look forward to the bright future ahead when we are able to physically come together once more.”

The Apollo Theater will present the fifth bi-annual **WOW (Women of the World)**, an international festival that elevates the voices, experiences, and truth of women spanning all ages. Taking place online from **Saturday, March 20 to Sunday, March 21**, this year’s festival’s theme is ***Black Women Transcending!***, and will feature two full days of panels, workshops, speakers, and performances. Participants include HBO’s “Lovecraft Country” award-winning actress **Aunjanue Ellis**; *New York Times* best-selling author and co-host of CBS’ “The Talk” **Elaine Welteroth**; poet, writer, and activist **Nikki Giovanni**; motivational speaker, editor, and author **Harriet Cole**; and political and women’s rights activist **Dr. Shola Mos-Shogbamimu** with performances by **Adeline, Dionne Farris**, and many more.

As part of the festival, the Apollo will feature a **Live Wire** conversation, **Hazel Scott: The Darling of Café Society**, part of the Apollo’s popular series that honors iconic individuals who have impacted the Theater’s History. Karen Chilton, author of “Hazel Scott: The Pioneering Journey of a Jazz Pianist,” will lead this celebration of Scott with special guests, Damien Sneed and Camille Thurman. **WOW: Teen Summit**, which will dissect gender politics and how it impacts girls and young women of color internally, also returns to the Festival. Through performances from singer, songwriter and spoken-word artist **Brianna Knight** and singer **Alyssa Martinez** and a panel discussion moderated by reporter and producer **Kay Angrum** with panelists including community activists **Akia S. Callum, Malaysia Freeman**, and **Hebh Jamal**, audience members will engage in a dialogue to encourage a collective call to action. The Festival will close with **Apollo Film Presents: ImageNation’s Cocktails & Sol Cinema**, featuring short films by women from around the world in speculative fiction, sci-fi, fantasy and folklore. Additional details and a complete WOW Festival line-up will be announced at a later date. WOW Apollo is presented in partnership with The WOW Foundation.

In April, **Apollo Comedy Club**, presented in partnership with the legendary **Bob Sumner** (producer of Def Comedy Jam, creator of Laff Mobb on Aspire), will celebrate the Theater’s rich comedic roots on **Friday, April 2 at 9:00pm EST** and take a look back on five years of **Apollo Comedy Club**. This informal conversation with Sumner and Late Nights producer Dwight Jordan will include back-stage stories, video clips and highlights of the comedians who have performed at Harlem’s hottest night spot. The Apollo also continues its support of emerging musical artists through its monthly **Apollo Music Café** series, which will feature Roc Nation’s **Infinity’s Song** on **Saturday, April 3 at 9:00pm EST**. **Apollo Music Café** artists will continue to record their performances on the Apollo Theater’s Sound Stage for streaming on the Apollo Digital Stage.

A cultural anchor in Harlem and New York City, the Apollo continues its role as a catalyst for social engagement through community and educational offerings. From **February 1 – 5 and 8 – 12**, the Apollo Education Department will present School Day Live Online: **Five Days with Step Afrika!**, a series of five pre-recorded videos that lets school students and teachers dive more deeply into the history and tradition of stepping. Videos on the history of stepping, tutorials, and a performance by Step Afrika! will be available on demand. On **Tuesday, April 20 at 7:00pm EST**, Apollo Education will examine the rise of new media with **Cinematography – Shifting the Looking Glass**, which will introduce audiences to the ways in which

cinematographers are using smartphones and other innovative devices to tell and share their stories. On **Monday, May 17 at 7:00pm EST** the Apollo will celebrate and explore the cultural, societal, and aesthetic impact of the \$60 billion-plus fashion industry behemoth: the sneaker, with *Footprint – Design and Creativity in Sneaker Culture*, a career panel featuring digital demonstrations, and conversations with leaders from the creative and business industries.

The Apollo Theater brings back its innovative series *Apollo Film Presents: ImageNation's Cocktails & Sol Cinema* on **Sunday, May 20 at 7:00pm EST**, featuring independent films primarily directed by people of color that explore the history, examine social issues, and highlight the humanity of Pan-African people in the genres of drama, science fiction, animation, comedy, documentary, experimental, and emerging media. Please check www.ApolloTheater.org for updates.

Looking ahead, the Apollo continues to develop the theaters at the Victoria, marking the first physical expansion in the Apollo's history. Scheduled to open fall 2021, the theaters at the Victoria will continue to support the Apollo's mission to work and collaborate with a greater number of emerging and established artists of color across disciplines.

****A complete calendar listing of upcoming programming is available on the following page****

TICKET INFO

Tickets for the Apollo Theater's 2021 season are available now at www.ApolloTheater.org. Tickets for *Apollo Comedy Club*, *Apollo Music Café*, **WOW Teen Summit**, and **Apollo Education** events are available at no charge with RSVP. *Five Days with Step Afrika!* videos are available on demand for registered schools and educators.

Tickets for *House Party* are available for \$15 and \$10 for Apollo A-List Members.

For **WOW (Women of the World)**, tickets for the live, virtual, two-day event start at \$15 (through March 13), \$20 for the week of the event (March 14-21).

To become an Apollo A-List Member, please click [here](#). Please check www.ApolloTheater.org for updates on ticket availability for additional 2021 spring season programming.

SUPPORT

The Apollo's spring season is made possible by leadership support from Coca-Cola, Citi, Sherman Fairchild Foundation, Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, the Jerome L. Greene Arts Access Fund in the New York Community Trust, HBO, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Public support for the Apollo Theater is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Leadership support for the Apollo New Works initiative provided by the Ford Foundation.

Apollo Education Programs provided by the Ronald O. Perelman Family Foundation, BNY Mellon, Fund II, Hearst Foundations, the Jerome L. Greene Arts Access Fund in the New York Community Trust, The Pinkerton Foundation. Generous support from Apollo EmpowHer, Conscious Kids Inc., Con Edison, Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, Ellis L. Phillips Foundation, The Reginald F. Lewis Foundation, and public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, with special support from New York City Council Members Bill Perkins and Mark Levine.

ABOUT THE APOLLO THEATER

The legendary Apollo Theater—the soul of American culture—plays a vital role in cultivating emerging artists and launching legends. Since its founding, the Apollo has served as a center of innovation and a creative catalyst for Harlem, the city of New York, and the world.

With music at its core, the Apollo’s programming extends to dance, theater, spoken word, and more. This includes the world premiere of the theatrical adaptation of Master Artist-in-Residence Ta-Nehisi Coates’s *Between the World and Me* and the New York premiere of the opera *We Shall Not Be Moved*; special programs such as the blockbuster concert *Bruno Mars Live at the Apollo*; *100: The Apollo Celebrates Ella*; and the annual *Africa Now!* Festival. The non-profit Apollo Theater is a performing arts presenter, commissioner, and collaborator that also produces festivals; large-scale dance and musical works organized around a set of core initiatives that celebrate and extend the Apollo’s legacy through a contemporary lens, including the Women of the World (WOW) Festival; as well as other multidisciplinary collaborations with partner organizations.

Since introducing the first *Amateur Night* contests in 1934, the Apollo Theater has served as a testing ground for new artists working across a variety of art forms and has ushered in the emergence of many new musical genres—including jazz, swing, bebop, R&B, gospel, blues, soul, and hip-hop. Among the countless legendary performers who launched their careers at the Apollo are Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, James Brown, Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight, Luther Vandross, H.E.R., D’Angelo, Lauryn Hill, Machine Gun Kelly, and Miri Ben Ari; and the Apollo’s forward-looking artistic vision continues to build on this legacy. For more information about the Apollo, visit www.ApolloTheater.org.

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CALENDAR OF APOLLO THEATER’S 2021 SPRING SEASON:

Apollo School Day Live Online presents: *Five Days with Step Afrika!*

February 1 – 5 and 8 – 12

On Demand

Free on demand for registered schools and educators

Five Days with Step Afrika provides school audiences with five pre-recorded videos that lets viewers dive more deeply into this tradition, including: “What is Stepping?”, an introductory video and educational guide highlighting the history of stepping; “Stepping with Step Afrika!”, a stepping tutorial; “The Performance, Act 1,” a condensed first half of standard Step Afrika! performance; “The Performance, Act 2,” a condensed second half of standard Step Afrika!; and “Meet the Artists of Step Afrika!”, a pre-recorded Q&A session with company members that will allow students to learn more about the artists and their lives. The videos will be available on demand at www.ApolloTheater.org.

School Day Live is generously supported by the Jerome L. Greene Arts Access Fund in the New York Community Trust.

Apollo Film & Screen/Play Present: *30 Years of House Party*

Saturday, February 27 at 7:00pm EST

Tickets: \$15, \$10 for Apollo A List Members

Celebrating 30 Years of *House Party*, the evening will feature highlights from the musical and comedy cult classics *House Party* (1990) and *House Party 2* (1991), a conversation with the film’s key players, **Christopher “Kid” Reid** and **Christopher “Play” Martin**, who will also perform; **A.J. Johnson**; **Darryl “Chill” Mitchell**; writer and director **Reginald Hudlin**; producer **Warrington Hudlin**; **DJ Cassidy**; and

other special guests, along with performances by legendary hip-hop and R&B group **Full Force**, **Lisa Lisa**, **Today**, and **DJ Wiz**. *House Party* was one of the first films to center the Black teenage experience for a mainstream audience. Also featuring an array of hip-hop artists and now-iconic dance-offs, both films helped catapult Kid 'N Play to superstardom and continue to resonate across generations of audiences today.

Created and produced by Cali Green, the Screen/Play series celebrates “throwback” films and their soundtracks.

Women of the World

Presented in Partnership with The WOW Foundation

Saturday March 20 and Sunday March 21

The Apollo Theater will present the fifth bi-annual **WOW (Women of the World)**, an international festival that elevates the voices, experiences, and truth of women spanning all ages, online from Saturday, March 20 to Sunday, March 21. This year’s festival’s theme is ***Black Women Transcending!*** and will feature two full days of panels, workshops, speakers, and performances. Participants include HBO’s “Lovecraft Country” award-winning actress **Aunjanue Ellis**; *New York Times* best-selling author and co-host of CBS’ “The Talk” **Elaine Welteroth**; poet, writer, and activist **Nikki Giovanni**; motivational speaker, editor, and author **Harriet Cole**; and political and women’s rights activist **Dr. Shola Mos-Shogbamimu**, and many more. As part of the festival, the Apollo will feature Karen Chilton, author of “Hazel Scott: The Pioneering Journey of a Jazz Pianist,” who will lead a celebration of the pioneering artist and activist Hazel Scott with special guests, Damien Sneed and Camille Thurman. **WOW: Teen Summit**, which will dissect gender politics and how it impacts girls and women of color internationally, also returns. Through performances from singer, songwriter and spoken-word artist **Brianna Knight** and singer **Alyssa Martinez** and a panel discussion moderated by reporter and producer **Kay Angrum** with panelists including community activists **Akia S. Callum**, **Malaysia Freeman**, and **Hebh Jamal**, audiences will engage in a dialogue to encourage a collective call to action. WOW will also include performances by the French-Caribbean singer/songwriter and bassist **Adeline**, who masterfully conjures a whole mood with a kaleidoscope of luscious ballads fused with raw-funk and a dose of neo-soul and American singer-songwriter Dionne Farris. The Festival will close with short films by women from around the world in speculative fiction, sci-fi, fantasy and folklore curated by Apollo Film’s **ImageNation’s Cocktails & Sol Cinema**. WOW Apollo is presented in partnership with The WOW Foundation.

WOW Teen Summit is generously supported by BNY Mellon, Ellis L. Phillips Foundation, The Hearst Foundations, The Neuberger Berman Foundation, The Pinkerton Foundation and special support from public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

Apollo Comedy Club: A Look Back on Laughter

Friday, April 2 at 9:00pm EST

Free with RSVP

The **Apollo Comedy Club**, which celebrates the Theater’s rich comedic roots and is presented in partnership with the legendary Bob Sumner (producer of Def Comedy Jam, creator of Laff Mobb on Aspire), features the best up and coming talent in comedy today. This season, Sumner and Late Night producer Dwight Jordan will look back on five years of the **Apollo Comedy Club**. This informal conversation will include back-stage stories, video clips and highlights of the comedians who have performed at Harlem’s hottest night spot.

Apollo Music Café: Roc Nation’s Infinity’s Song

Saturday, April 3 at 9:00pm EST
Free with RSVP

Roc Nation's Infinity's Song is a sibling band and music collective formed in 2014 in New York City whose members are not only singers but also songwriters, arrangers, instrumentalists, and music producers. Since its formation, Infinity's Song has consistently performed around NYC, cultivating a grassroots fanbase through pop up street performances in Central Park and the NYC subway stations. Singing on stages both small and great, the group has toured the U.S., been featured on National Television (NBC's "The Today Show" and ABC's "The View"), and frequently collaborates with other musical acts, most recently Kanye West, Jon Batiste, Tori Kelly and more.

Apollo Education Career Panel: *Cinematography - Shifting the Looking Glass*

Tuesday, April 20 at 7:00pm EST
Free with RSVP

During this unprecedented time, new tools have taken center stage in the documentation of the human experience by filmmakers. Cinematography is an essential part of the filmmaking process, elevating the ways in which stories are told and experienced. This career panel will show how cinematographers are using smartphones and other innovative devices to tell and share their stories.

Apollo Education Career Panel: *FootPrint – Design and Creativity in Sneaker Culture*

Thursday, May 17 at 7:00pm EST
Free with RSVP

Presented by Apollo Theater Education, Harlem 2020, and GoodThin.gs, *FootPrint – Design and Creativity in Sneaker Culture* will celebrate the cultural, societal, and aesthetic impact of the sneaker through interactive storytelling, demonstrations, and conversations with leaders from the creative and business industries.

Apollo Film Presents: *ImageNation's Cocktails & Sol Cinema*

Thursday, May 20 at 7:00pm EST
Tickets: \$12, \$10 for Apollo A List Members
Check www.ApolloTheater.org for updates on the film selection

ImageNation, an innovative Harlem-based company, partners with the Apollo to present quarterly socials featuring premier and advance screenings of Pan-African films, preceded by a reception with a live DJ/performance, followed by a talkback. The series will feature films, primarily directed by people of color, that explore the history, examine social issues, and highlight the humanity of Pan-African people in the genres of drama, science fiction, animation, comedy, documentary, experimental, and emerging media. Film to be announced at a later date.

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