



The Apollo and WNYC Announce
The 16th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration

“MLK – Activism and the Arts”

Led by a team of WNYC and WQXR hosts including

**Melissa Harris-Perry, Terrance McKnight, Jami Floyd, Brian Lehrer,
Alison Stewart, and Kai Wright**

**Guests include THE REVEREND AL SHARPTON, RASHAD ROBINSON,
BILL RHODEN, TREZANA BEVERLY, among others**

Event to be broadcast on WNYC and PRX's [The Takeaway](#)

and Streaming on the Apollo Digital Stage

on the official Dr. Martin Luther King holiday Monday, January 17, 2022

Presented in collaboration with The March on Washington Film Festival

New York, NY – (December 20, 2021; updated January 11, 2022) – WNYC and The Apollo will present WNYC's 16th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration, “**MLK – Activism and the Arts**,” as part of the Apollo’s *Uptown Hall* series, airing as a special online-only event on the [Apollo’s Digital Stage](#) on Monday, January 17, 2022 at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. ET. To RSVP for the free event, please visit <https://www.apollotheater.org/event/uptown-hall-mlk-activism-and-the-arts-broadcast/>.

This year, “**MLK – Activism and the Arts**” will be co-led by a roster of WNYC and WQXR hosts: **Melissa Harris-Perry**, host of WNYC Studios and PRX’s [The Takeaway](#); WQXR host and author **Terrance McKnight**; **Jami Floyd** of WNYC’s Race and Justice Unit; **Brian Lehrer**, Host of WNYC’s *Brian Lehrer Show*; **Alison Stewart**, host of WNYC’s *All of It*; and **Kai Wright**, host of *The United States of Anxiety*. This year’s discussion will focus on how Dr. King leveraged the influence of artists in the civil rights movement and how that legacy of activism in the arts continues today. Focusing on the long-standing connection between activism and artistry, participants will discuss how the struggle for social justice affected icons from Nina Simone to John Legend and how they, in turn, helped drive the struggle for social justice.

In addition to the video broadcast on the [Apollo’s Digital Stage](#), “MLK - Activism and The Arts” will be broadcast on WNYC and PRX’s [The Takeaway](#) on the official Dr. Martin Luther King holiday Monday, January 17. *The Takeaway* airs weekdays at 9am on WNYC AM 820 and 3pm ET on WNYC 93.9 FM; check local listings for airtimes in other markets.

“I’m pleased to once again host WNYC’s annual MLK event now as a full-time host at the station,” said **Melissa Harris-Perry**. “I’m particularly enthusiastic about our focus on the arts and activism. The generative creative energies that shaped the Civil Rights Movement of Dr. King’s era continue to give life and bring meaning to the continuing struggle for racial justice. What venue is more appropriate to consider this undeniable power of the arts than the Apollo.”

Confirmed Participants

- [**Trezana Beverly**](#) - First African-American actress to receive a Tony Award for "Best Featured Actress in a Play" (for the 1977 Broadway play [*For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf*](#))
- [**Howard Bryant**](#), Sports Journalist/Author of "Full Dissidence" and "The Heritage"
- [**Najee Dorsey**](#) - Founder of Black Art in America (BAIA) and visual artist
- [**Dr. Harry Edwards**](#), Professor Emeritus of Sociology, UC-Berkeley focused on experiences of African-American athletes
- [**Javier Gooden + JSWISS**](#) - Rappers
- [**Jonathan McCrory**](#) - Director, National Black Theatre of Harlem
- [**Garrett McQueen**](#) – Advocate for diversity in classical music
- [**Bill Rhoden**](#), award-winning sports columnist, New York Times and writer-at-large, The Undefeated
- [**Rashad Robinson**](#) - President, Color Of Change
- [**Reverend Al Sharpton**](#) - Host of MSNBCs "Politics Nation," President of National Action Network, internationally renowned civil rights activist
- [**Damion Thomas**](#) - Curator, Museum of Sports for Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture
- [**The Honorable Andrew Young**](#) - Former mayor of Atlanta, first black UN Ambassador, member of U.S. House of Representatives, activist during 1960's civil rights movement; contributing a special video message

"MLK - Activism and the Arts" will also include artistic presentations and performances. **Gregory Hopkins** will direct **The Gathering Quartet** in a preview performance from Joel Thompson's oratorio *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*, a powerful, multi-movement choral work honoring black men killed by police or by authority figures; this performance is an excerpt from *The Gathering: A Collective Sonic Ring Shout* which will debut at the Apollo in May. The event will also feature a video presentation by classical music curator **Garrett McQueen** on the history of activism by Pan-African musicians. Rappers **Javier Gooden** and **JSWISS** will close out the program with an electrifying tribute to black trailblazers.

ABOUT WNYC

With an urban vibrancy and a global perspective, WNYC is New York's public radio station, broadcasting and streaming award-winning journalism, groundbreaking audio programming and essential talk radio to the city and beyond. WNYC is a leading member station of NPR and broadcasts programs from the BBC World Service, along with a roster of WNYC-produced local programs that champion the stories and spirit of New York City and the surrounding region. From its state-of-the-art studios, WNYC is reshaping audio for a new generation of listeners, producing some of the most beloved nationally-syndicated public radio programs including Radiolab, On the Media, The New Yorker Radio Hour, and The Takeaway. WNYC broadcasts on 93.9 FM and AM 820 to listeners in New York and the tri-state area, and is available to audiences everywhere at [WNYC.org](#), the WNYC app and through major digital radio services, all made possible through the generous support of our members, donors and sponsors.

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 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 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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