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The Apollo Announces Winter/Spring 2023 Program Highlights Including

Afrobeat Royalty Seun Kuti and Egypt 80

**Apollo Commissioned Jazz Concert featuring Russell Gunn and
Special Guests Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of *Blues People*
by Amiri Baraka**

Hip Hop Legends Ma\$, Cam'ron, and Jadakiss

Annual Celebration of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

**Annual favorites including Africa Now! Festival, Apollo Music
Café and Comedy Club recognizing emerging talent**

89th Anniversary of *Amateur Night at the Apollo*

Harlem, NY – (January 10, 2023) – As **The Apollo** gears up for a historic 2023 with the opening of The Apollo's Victoria Theater and the renovation of the Historic Theater, the iconic Harlem nonprofit announced additional upcoming concerts, comedy shows, and educational programs for the winter and spring of 2023. This spring The Apollo celebrates 50 years of Hip Hop with a concert by legends **Ma\$, Cam'ron, and Jadakiss** and premieres ***The Blues and Its People***, a newly commissioned work composed by jazz trumpeter **Russell Gunn** and performed with special guests and Gunn's **Royal Krunk Jazz Orchestra** in celebration of the 60th anniversary of Amiri Baraka's seminal novel, ***Blues People: Negro Music in White America***. The legendary ***Amateur Night at the Apollo*** returns and Apollo Young Producers curates a conversation on today's complicated social issues with young community activists. From conversations with prominent artists and creatives to annual audience favorites, this season's programming continues to center and amplify Black artists and voices from the African diaspora. Additional Winter and Spring programming will be announced in the coming weeks.

"We continue into *The Next Movement* as we engage with emerging and established artists to help us explore our past and present and imagine our futures through the arts. As we begin a milestone year for the organization, The Apollo continues its role as a producer, commissioner, partner and collaborator with artists and other cultural organizations, incubating, creating, and presenting work that centers Black voices from the African Diaspora," said **The Apollo's Executive Producer Kamilah Forbes**.

The Apollo also continues its robust education programs that extend its commitment to acting as a catalyst for opportunity for the more than 20,000 students, teachers, and

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audiences it engages annually. The programs use The Apollo's storied history as a cultural, civic, and community resource and its influence on Black culture to build knowledge and highlight the impact The Apollo has had on arts and culture worldwide, and also supports future generations of arts and entertainment practitioners both inside and out of the classroom. With programs and workshops offered in person and remotely, The Apollo provides several routes for students and educators to connect the performing arts to academic subject areas, incorporating National Core Arts Standards. The Apollo also offers a myriad of internship and apprenticeship opportunities for the next generation to learn about performing arts careers behind the scenes. To learn more, visit apollotheater.org/education.

CALENDAR OF THE APOLLO'S WINTER/SPRING 2023 SEASON:
All times below are listed in EST.

Apollo Uptown Hall - MLK: Blueprint for the Culture

Sunday, January 15, 2023

The Apollo's Historic Theater and The Apollo Digital Stage | 3:00 PM

Free with RSVP

The 17th annual Apollo Uptown Hall MLK celebration focuses on Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement of the 60's as the template for modern social and civil justice movements. This year, The Apollo and WNYC celebrate young people impacting society through activism, engagement, and a commitment to justice. WNYC's *Notes from America* host, **Kai Wright** moderates the first hour of this year's celebration. Music, dance and other forms of creative expression round out the afternoon. The event will also livestream on the Apollo Digital Stage, and The Apollo's Facebook and YouTube pages.

Apollo Young Producers presents MLK: Young Changemakers

Sunday, January 15, 2023

The Apollo Digital Stage: Digital Stage, Facebook, YouTube | 5:00 PM

Free with RSVP

This inspiring panel discussion highlights emerging activists and community leaders as they tackle gun violence, reproductive rights, and the need for holistic community care. Curated by the Apollo Young Producers. A collective of Apollo Theater Academy alumni, the Apollo Young Producers conceive and produce events to connect young artists to The Apollo. The event will stream on the Apollo Digital Stage and The Apollo's Facebook and Youtube pages.

The Apollo Presents Ma\$, Cam'ron and Jadakiss

Saturday, January 28, 2023

The Apollo Historic Theater | 8:00 PM

Tickets start at \$55

New York legends and multi-platinum selling artists Ma\$, Cam'ron and Jadakiss heat up The Apollo's iconic stage in this explosive one-night-only concert featuring classic hits such as "Time's Up", "Oh Boy", "What You Want" and their new single, "G.L.H. (Gorilla, Lion, Hyena)"!

Apollo Comedy Club

The Apollo's Soundstage | 10:00 PM

Tickets: \$26.50 (plus \$10 food/beverage minimum)

The Apollo Comedy Club celebrates the Theater's rich comedic roots. Presented in partnership with the legendary Bob Sumner (producer of Def Comedy Jam, creator of Laff Mobb on Aspire), The Apollo Comedy Club features the best up and coming talent in comedy today.

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- **Thursday, February 2, 2023 at 10:00 PM**
Hosted by Geneva Joy
Featuring Jerrel Beamon, Nema Katt and Ricco Da Great
- **Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 10:00 PM**
Hosted by Darryl Damn
Featuring Sal Holmes, Maria Sanchez and Nema Williams
- **Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 10:00 PM**
Part of the Africa Now! Festival
Hosted by Alfred Kainga
Featuring Trixx, QBOY and Karmen Naidoo
- **Thursday, May 4, 2023 at 10:00 PM**
Hosted by Baldhead Phillips
Featuring Big Eli, Cherryann Trinidad and Insane Wayne

Apollo Music Café

The Apollo's Soundstage | 10:00 PM

Tickets: \$28.50 (plus \$10 food/beverage minimum)

The Apollo Music Café series features diverse performances across a myriad of genres (R&B, hip hop, country, soul, jazz, pop, funk, and rock) on in the intimate Apollo Soundstage.

- **Friday, February 3 at 10:00 PM:**
Kenneth Whalum
With his transcending "Prayer" and series of Broken Land albums, Whalum is equal part storyteller and musician who fuses soul, alternative, jazz, Hip Hop, R&B and blues. Whalum has performed alongside some of today's most renowned artists including D'Angelo, Sean "Diddy" Combs, Jay-Z, Frank Ocean, Maxwell and Beyoncé.
- **Saturday, February 4 at 10:00 PM:**
Britton Smith and the Sting
Tony Award-winner **Britton Smith** who self-identifies as a Black Gay Mega Pastor, and his band lead their congregation with an electric passion for funk, gospel, soul, and testimony.
- **Friday, March 3, 2023 at 10:00 PM:**
Chapel Hart
Straight from television's "America's Got Talent," **Chapel Hart** comes to Harlem for a rare night of country music at the Apollo Music Café. Brimming with hospitality and sweet southern charm, the Mississippi trio is set to perform songs from their album *The Girls Are Back In Town*.
- **Saturday, March 4, 2023 at 10:00 PM:**
Yasser Tejeda
Guitarist, vocalist, composer and producer **Yasser Tejeda** gives traditional folkloric music a new spin with jazz, rock and Caribbean rhythms in "a frenzied celebration of ancestral union" (Billboard, 2019).
- **Friday, April 14, 2023 at 10:00 PM:**
Preye Odede
The *Africa Now!* edition of *Apollo Music Café* features Nigerian Afrosoul singer and songwriter Preyé who creates a sensual night of music set to warm Afrobeats and harmonious, velvety smooth vocals.
- **Friday, May 5, 2023 at 10:00 PM:**
The Soapbox Presents: Stoop Sessions
Popular Harlem music curators **The Soapbox** bring the party inside and on The Apollo stage for an evening

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of old school and contemporary R&B, complete with a full house band, red cups, a stoop full of singers, and a checkerboard dance floor.

- **Saturday, May 6, 2023 at 10:00 PM:**

Gene Noble

R & B Singer Gene Noble will make a rare New York appearance at The Apollo, performing songs such as “Matching Tattoos”, “Beautiful and Broken”, “Lost One” and more.

School Day Live

The Apollo presents *School Day Live*, an educational program that brings the “Apollo Experience” to a new generation of theatergoers while providing an excellent opportunity to learn about the arts, history, and culture. Most programs suitable for students grade k-12.

- **School Day Live: The Rhythm & Blues Revue with The Michael-David Band**
Tuesday, February 14, 2023

Apollo’s Historic Theater | 11:30 AM

Tickets: \$5 per person

This School Day Live performance featuring The Michael-David Band showcases the great songs of Rhythm and Blues through a special Valentine’s Day theme: “The Things We Love”. Join The Michael-David Band to explore the ways in which R&B music has reflected all kinds of love-- love of family, friends, community, romantic love, and self-care. *Most appropriate for students grades 3-12.*

- **School Day Live: String Stories: The Roots and Fruits of the Blues**
Friday, March 10, 2023

Apollo’s Historic Theater | 11:30 AM

Tickets: \$5 per person

The performance highlights the history of the blues and the evolution of its accompanied instruments such as the guitar and banjo from the West African griot tradition, to the African American acapella spiritual tradition to work songs. Students will also learn about the origins of the blues, how its sound varies regionally, the relationship of the blues to the culture and history of Black people in America, and how the genre has evolved to shape and influence other music styles such as jazz, rhythm & blues and rock & roll. Musicians highlighted in this performance include **Sister Rosetta Tharp, Elizabeth Cotten, Odetta, and Memphis Minnie**. This is a multi-media presentation that features still and moving images. **The Groove Diplomacy Future Music Orchestra**, under the direction of drummer **LaFrae Sci**, is comprised of vocalists and instrumentalists. *Most appropriate for students grades 3-12.*

- **School Day Live: JazzReach: Stolen Moments: The First 100 Years of Jazz**
Friday, May 19, 2023

Apollo’s Historic Theater | 11:30 AM

Tickets: \$5 per person

This edition of Apollo School Day Live welcomes JazzReach to the Apollo to present *Stolen Moments: The First 100 Years of Jazz*. Together in the Apollo’s Historic theater, students and educators will explore the evolution and rich history of jazz and some of the musicians who have made it one of the world’s most enduring art forms. *This performance is most appropriate for grades 6 – 12.*

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The Blues and Its People

World Premiere /Apollo Commission

Saturday, February 18, 2023

The Apollo's Historic Theater | 8:00 PM

Tickets start at \$46

The Apollo premieres *The Blues and Its People*, a new work by jazz composer and musician Russell Gunn inspired by and commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the book *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* written by Amiri Baraka. In response to select readings from Baraka's perennial text, Gunn, his 27-piece Royal Krunk Jazz Orchestra and special guests traverse through field hollers, gospel, the blues, jazz and more through seven new music works. At once paying homage to the expanse of Black music, past, present and future, the evening highlights the basic premise of Amiri Baraka's work. Special guests include Grammy-nominated jazz vocalist Jazzmeia Horn, Grammy award-winning vibraphonist Stefon Harris, trombonist Craig Harris, saxophonist Oliver Lake, West African Djembe drummer Weedie Braimah, Piano Prince of New Orleans Davell Crawford, poet Jessica Care Moore, and vocalists Miles Griffith and Leon Timbo.

Amateur Night Season Opener

Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at 7:30 PM

Continues every Wednesday evening through the Grand Finale in November 2023

The Apollo's Historic Theater

Tickets start at \$29

Amateur Night at the Apollo is one of New York's most popular live entertainment experiences, attracting performers and audiences the world over. The weekly series *Amateur Night at the Apollo* continues to bring into the spotlight the top singers, dancers, comedians, and more from across the nation every Wednesday. Known for its notoriously tough "Be Good or Be Gone!" audience who "cheer" or "boo" each contestant, attendees are crucial in determining which participants will go on to compete for the chance to win this year's champion title and grand prize of \$20,000. Since its inception in 1934, Amateur Night has played a major role in the cultivation of artists who have gone on to influence genres across the musical spectrum, win numerous Grammy Awards, and perform to sold-out crowds, from Ella Fitzgerald to Lauryn Hill, Machine Gun Kelly, Jazmine Sullivan, and H.E.R. Digital auditions are ongoing, in person auditions take place at the Apollo on **March 25, 2023 and September 9, 2023**.

ImageNation's Cocktails and Sol Cinema

The Apollo continues its collaboration with ImageNation in the co-presentation of the Cocktails & Sol Cinema Series, a social gathering that includes the screening of Pan-African films, a live DJ, cocktails, and a post-show conversation with the filmmakers.

- **Film: *Asinamali***
Directed by Mbongeni Ngema, 2017, 105 min., South Africa
Thursday, February 23
Cocktail Reception, 6:00 PM
Film Screening, 7:00 PM
The Apollo's Soundstage
Tickets start at \$26.50
Adapted from Mbongeni Ngema's Broadway production of "Asinamali", this story takes place in a prison, where a group of inmates are asked to create and perform a stage play for the governor and his associates. Seven inmates, crammed together in a small cell, use their free time at night, after a hard day's work, creating the stage play as a way of escaping the reality of where they are. The title is Zulu for "we have no money."
- **Film: *Tonton Manu***
Directed by Patrick Puzinat, Thierry Dechilly, 2021, 90 min., France
Saturday, April 15, 2023
Cocktail Reception, 4 PM
Film Screening, 5:00 PM

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The Apollo's Soundstage

Tickets: \$26.50

Manu Dibango is eighty years old. Smiling like a kid, he blows out his birthday cake candles, followed by applause. An hour and a half later, he is eighty-five years old. Between these two milestone birthdays, the film directors followed in the day-to-day footsteps of this smiling, debonair giant; for whom the expression, "quiet strength" seems to have been coined. Composer, musician, journalist, and ambassador of the Francophone world, honored and distinguished around the world; Manu Dibango has remained himself wherever he may find himself.

Apollo Theater Salon Series

The Apollo Theater Salon Series, a part of the Apollo New Works initiative, provides development support for contemporary new work across artistic disciplines. The series expands on the Apollo's tradition of nurturing artists and projects by providing a one-week residency.

- ***Salt City***

By Jessica Care Moore and Aku Kadogo

Saturday, April 8, 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM

The Apollo's Soundstage

Tickets: \$20

Salt City, a collaborative artistic effort between acclaimed poet and writer Jessica Care Moore and award-winning director and choreographer Aku Kadogo, along with a myriad of Detroit techno music legends is centered around Detroit in year 3071 and tells the story of a brown girl named "SALT" who time travels to the future and can't find her tribe. The script is written in the poetic form of a techno choreopoem. Salt City is a work in progress and is developed with support by Spelman College, The Wright Museum of African American History, Knight Foundation and Joyce Foundation.

- ***Dream, Girl***

By Lisa Rosetta Strum

Saturday, April 29, 2:00 PM & 7:00 PM

The Apollo's Soundstage

Tickets: \$20

They say the neon lights shine bright on Broadway, but not as blinding as the ambitions of Shirley Clementine Walker. An ambitious performer willing to do anything to become a STAR, must lose everything to find her way back, and dare to dream again. Presented in partnership with New Black Fest.

Africa Now! Festival

April 13-15, 2023

The Apollo's Soundstage & Historic Theater

Celebrate the rich and unparalleled influence of the African Diaspora on the global community in a weekend-long festival like no other. For its ninth season, Apollo's *Africa Now! Festival* spotlights cultural innovators and global thinkers from the continent in a celebration of contemporary musicians, comedians, filmmakers, and cultural innovators on the world-famous Apollo stage. Tap in and check out this year's lineup of artists who are revolutionizing and driving trends across all facets of culture.

The *Africa Now! Festival* is a continuation of the Apollo's 2022-2023 season, *The Next Movement*, an exploration of what's new, now and next in music, dance, art and ideas.

- **Thursday, April 13, 2023**

Apollo Comedy Club Hosted by Alfred Kainga

Featuring Trixx, QBOY and Karmen Naidoo

The Apollo's Soundstage | 10:00 PM

Tickets: \$26.50 (plus \$10 food/beverage minimum)

The Apollo Comedy Club celebrates the Theater's rich comedic roots. Presented in partnership with the legendary Bob Sumner (producer of Def Comedy Jam, creator of Laff Mobb on *Aspire*), the Apollo Comedy

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Club features the best up and coming talent in comedy today. The comedy shows precedes the Theater's weekend music series, Apollo Music Café, extending the Theater's late-night offerings.

- **Friday, April 14, 2023**

Apollo Music Cafe: Preye Odede

The Apollo's Soundstage | 10:00 PM

Tickets: \$28.50 (plus \$10 food/beverage minimum)

Africa Now! Continues with a special edition of *Apollo Music Cafe*. Nigerian Afrosoul singer and songwriter Preyé creates a sensual night of music set to warm Afrobeats and harmonious, velvety smooth vocals.

- **Saturday, April 15, 2023**

Panel: At the Crossroads - Art, Politics and Culture in Nigeria

Apollo's Soundstage | 2:00 PM

Tickets: \$15

A panel of artists and scholars, including Nigerian artist Seun Kuti and journalist Ivie Ani discuss the contemporary convergence of art, politics, and culture in Nigeria and how it is reverberating on the global stage. More Panelists to be announced. Curated by Sinat Giwa.

- **Saturday, April 15, 2023**

ImageNation's Cocktails & Sol Cinema: Tonton Manu

The Apollo's Soundstage | 5:00 PM

Tickets: \$26.50

Manu Dibango is eighty years old. Smiling like a kid, he blows out his birthday cake candles, followed by applause. An hour and a half later, he is eighty-five years old. Between these two milestone birthdays, the film directors followed in the day-to-day footsteps of this smiling, debonair giant; for whom the expression, "quiet strength" seems to have been coined. Composer, musician, journalist, and ambassador of the Francophone world, honored and distinguished around the world; Manu Dibango has remained himself wherever he may find himself.

- **Saturday, April 15, 2023**

Seun Kuti & Egypt 80

The Apollo's Historic Theater | 8:00 PM

Tickets: \$28-\$70

Seun Kuti is the youngest son of Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti. He has spent most of his life preserving and extending his father's political and musical legacy as the leader of his father's former band Egypt 80. Born in early 1983, Seun showed interest in his father's music from the age of five, and at nine began opening Fela's shows, singing a select group of songs with Egypt 80 before his dad took the stage. As a developing saxophonist and percussionist, he entered the formal ranks of the band before he was 12. Fela passed in 1997, and Seun, in fulfillment of his father's wishes, assumed the mantle as head of Egypt 80; he has run it ever since.

TICKETS

Tickets for the Apollo's 2023 Winter/Spring season are available at www.ApolloTheater.org.

SUPPORT

The Apollo's 2022-2023 season is made possible by leadership support from Coca-Cola, Citi, Sherman Fairchild Foundation, Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, the Jerome L. Greene Foundation Fund in The New York Community Trust, and The 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 Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York City Council.

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About The Apollo

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. In 2023, the Apollo will open the Apollo's Victoria Theaters, which will include two new theater spaces, and begin the renovation of its Historic Theater, marking the first ever expansion and renovation of the Apollo in its nearly 90-year history. Read more about the project here: www.apollotheater.org/renovation-restoration-and-transformation/

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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