

APOLLO

The Apollo Spring Benefit Raises over \$2.2 Million

Star studded event brings out Spike Lee, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Michelle Ebanks, Bevy Smith, Faith Evans, Jozzy, Bryant Gumbel, Amirah Vann, Valerie Jarrett, Jaboukie Young-White, Leon, Deborah Cox, Chante Moore, Scott Mills, Susan Kelechi Watson, Nikole Hannah- Jones, and more

Musical performances by Gladys Knight, MC Lyte, Stout, Wyclef Jean, and Musical Direction by Ray Chew



HARLEM, NEW YORK - JUNE 12: Gladys Knight performs during 2023 Apollo Spring Benefit at The Apollo on June 12, 2023 in New York City. (Photo by Shahar Azran Photography)



HARLEM, NEW YORK - JUNE 12: Spike Lee presents the Impact Award to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar during 2023 Apollo Spring Benefit at The Apollo on June 12, 2023 in New York City. (Photo by Shahar Azran Photography)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK - JUNE 12: Outgoing Apollo CEO Jonelle Procope and Incoming Apollo CEO Michelle Ebanks are seen on the red carpet during 2023 Apollo Spring Benefit at The Apollo on June 12, 2023 in New York City. (Photo by Shahar Azran Photography)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK - JUNE 12: Wyclef Jean performs during 2023 Apollo Spring Benefit at The Apollo on June 12, 2023 in New York City. (Photo by Shahar Azran Photography)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK - JUNE 12: DJ Kool performs during 2023 Apollo Spring Benefit After Party on June 12, 2023 in New York City. (Photo by Flo Ngala)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK - JUNE 12: Mc Lyte performs “Cha Cha Cha” during 2023 Apollo Spring Benefit at The Apollo on June 12, 2023 in New York City. (Photo by Shahar Azran Photography)

Performance Photos [HERE](#) | Red Carpet Photos [HERE](#)

Credit: Shahar Azran Photography

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Credit: Video Production by Navigo Productions

HARLEM, NY – June 13, 2023

Last night celebrities, business and philanthropic elite, and fans of The Apollo came out to the 2023 Spring Benefit for the joyous occasion honoring outgoing President & CEO **Jonelle Procope** for her 20 years of invaluable service to the historic theater; NBA legend Kareem **Abdul-Jabbar** with the Impact Award presented by **Spike Lee**; and **Sean “Diddy” Combs** with the Icon Award presented by students from the **Capital Preparatory Harlem Charter**

School. Warby Parker co-founders **Neil Blumenthal** and **Dave Gilboa** accepted the **Corporate Award**. The event raised over \$2.2 Million for the historic organization.

The Apollo's season's theme aptly named "The Next Movement!" has presented signature programs, audience favorites, and exciting new works from artists pushing the boundaries of their art forms – from music and dance to fashion and film, and beyond.

Music Director and Harlem Native **Ray Chew** and his band supported performances from music elite including show opener, rising singer **Stout** performing a tribute to Tina Turner that had the audience on their feet with "Proud Mary." Throughout the evening **Wyclef Jean** hit the stage to perform classics such as "Maria Maria" and Fugees anthem "Killing Me Softly".

Gladys Knight returned to The Apollo to serenade the adoring crowd with hits "Midnight Train to Georgia" and "Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me" and **MC Lyte** performed a medley of hits including "Lyte as A Rock" and "Cha Cha Cha."

Spike Lee on Impact Award recipient **Kareem Abdul-Jabarr**: *"Many don't realize what it takes to be a great baller. It takes stamina and focus - being a great communicator - a motivator - being educated about your opponent and thinking five steps ahead - and, perhaps most importantly, elevating your teammates. Because, a great leader knows that no win is won alone. Great players go hard in the paint every single day and it shows. Now, apply these qualities to your whole life, and you can have real impact. That my friends, is what Kareem Abdul-Jabarr has done."*

Apollo Chairman of the Board, **Charles Phillips**, introduces **Jonelle Procope**: *"We should all pause and bear witness to the legacy that Jonelle preserved for future generations. We don't have many institutions of authentic, documented Black culture and excellence. The Apollo survived and prospered through wars, depressions, inflation, Covid, and even disco. She leaves behind a great team, a financially strong performing arts organization and a unique global brand. That's Kobe scoring 60 points in his last game and dropping the mic."*

Jonelle Procope reflected on her magnificent 20 year tenure at the helm of The Apollo: *"Back in 2003, when I first became its President, I couldn't believe that my office was actually in the theater where the magic was being made," said Procope. "For nearly a quarter of a century, the music wafting through the halls and on the stage of the Apollo created the most beautiful soundtrack for this period in my life, a soundtrack that is permanently imprinted on my heart and in my head."*

DJ Reborn kicked off the party and after DJing the party for more than a decade, International Celebrity DJ, **Derrick "D-Nice" Jones** returned with his signature sounds. Guests were also treated to a set by **DJ Kool** in the beautiful lounge designed by celebrity event planner and Apollo Board Member Bronson van Wyck. Other notable names in attendance included **Valerie Jarrett, Leon, Bryant Gumbel, Comb's sons, Justin Combs, Christian "King" Combs and Quincy Brown, Bevy Smith, Susan Kelechi Watson, Nikole Hannah-Jones** and more.

Proceeds from the Spring Benefit support the non-profit organization's year-round, world-class artistic, education, and community programs, as well as its commitment to Black arts and culture, and creating a 21st century performing arts canon.

About The Apollo

The legendary Apollo—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 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, Jazmine Sullivan, 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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