

# APOLLO

The Apollo Theater Announces Two New Performances:

## ***Say It Loud – I’m Black and I’m Proud at 50***

*Celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of James Brown’s “Say It Loud” and the Influence of Black Power Music*

*With Musical Direction by Six-time GRAMMY®-Winning Jazz Bassist **Christian McBride**  
Hosted by **Rev. Al Sharpton***

***October 20<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m.***

&

## ***Twisted Melodies***

*The Baltimore Center Stage and Congo Square Theatre Company Production  
In Association with Mosaic Theater Company*

*A Powerful One Man Show Paying Homage to Musical Legend **Donny Hathaway**  
Written by and Starring **Kelvin Roston Jr.***

***May 30<sup>th</sup> – June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019***

**Harlem, NY -----** (June 20, 2018) The Apollo Theater today announced that it will bring to its iconic stage two new performances that continue its commitment to articulating and projecting the African American narrative through arts and culture. In October 2018, The Apollo will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “Say It Loud - I’m Black and I’m Proud,” the Godfather of Soul James Brown’s seminal Black Power anthem, with the premiere of ***Say It Loud – I’m Black and I’m Proud at 50*** under the musical direction of six-time GRAMMY®- Award-winner **Christian McBride**. In May of 2019, in a co-production between The Apollo, Baltimore Center Stage, and Mosaic Theater, Kelvin Roston Jr. will pay homage to Donny Hathaway in the New York premiere of the one man play ***Twisted Melodies***.

As a non-profit theater, The Apollo holds artists’ voices at its core, and these two new collaborations continue to expand The Apollo’s programming and its commitment to celebrating African American arts and culture, supporting emerging and established artists, and serving as a cultural and civic resource for students, families, and the larger Harlem community.

On **October 20<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m.**, *Say It Loud – I’m Black and I’m Proud at 50* will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of James Brown’s 1968 hit “Say It Loud – I’m Black and I’m Proud!”, which became the theme song for the entire Black Power Movement. This powerful concert, under the musical direction of six-time GRAMMY®-winner and world-renowned bassist and composer **Christian McBride**, will feature an All-Star band and will be hosted by **Rev. Al Sharpton**. In addition to James Brown’s hits, this concert will celebrate the music he inspired among other African-American artists starting in the summer of 1968, including **The Temptations, Sly and the Family Stone**, and more.

From **May 30<sup>th</sup> – June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019**, Kelvin Roston, Jr. will embody Donny Hathaway in *Twisted Melodies*, the intimate one-man show he wrote on the life and artistry of the 1970s soul singer and composer. The production is co-produced by **Baltimore Center Stage** and **Congo Square Theatre Company** in association with the **Mosaic Theater Company**. *Twisted Melodies* is an immersive play about Hathaway – the brilliant musician best known for his duets with **Roberta Flack**, “The Closer I Get to You” and “Where is the Love?” – compelling inner struggle. Torn between the muses that inspire him and the mental illness that torments him, Hathaway evaluates the choices in his life in a gripping performance by Chicago-based writer and actor **Kelvin Roston, Jr.** The play will run for a special limited time at The Apollo Theater.

“As we bring the Apollo into its 85<sup>th</sup> year, we are presenting an engaging series of new works that honor our past legacies and look towards the future in which we showcase artists’ voices at our core,” said Apollo Executive Producer **Kamilah Forbes**. “These two new performances shine a powerful light on exciting but also challenging moments in black history, in hopes of creating an engaging dialogue with the Apollo community. Mental illness is an issue often kept quiet and unaddressed, but with a production like *Twisted Melodies*, we aim to challenge that stigma and open up the conversation.”

The two new programs will be complemented by the Apollo’s 2018-19 season to be announced at a later date, which will include an expanded roster of co-productions including, *Africa Now*, *WOW – Women of the World Festival*, the signature series: *Amateur Night at the Apollo*, the Theater’s original talent competition, *Apollo Music Café*, which showcases new musical artists and *Apollo Comedy Club*, which features up-and-coming comedic artists. The Apollo will also present public conversations, education programs for students and families, and other community events throughout the season.

### **TICKET INFO**

Tickets for *Say It Loud – I’m Black and I’m Proud at 50* and *Twisted Melodies* are available July 1st at the Apollo Theater Box Office: (212) 531-5305, 253 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000 or [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com). Tickets are on sale now.

### **SUPPORT**

*The Apollo’s 2018-2019 season is made possible by leadership support from Coca-Cola, Citi, Ford Foundation, The Howard Gilman Foundation, and the Jerome L. Greene Foundation.*

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### **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 special programs such as the blockbuster concert *Bruno Mars Live at the Apollo*, the world premiere theatrical reading of Ta-Nehisi Coates's National Book Award-winning *Between the World and Me, 100: The Apollo Celebrates Ella*, the annual Africa Now! Festival, and the recent New York premiere of the opera *We Shall Not Be Moved*. The Apollo is a performing arts presenting organization that also produces festivals and large-scale dance and music works organized around a set of core initiatives that celebrate and extend the Apollo's legacy through a contemporary lens; global festivals including the Women of the World (WOW) Festival and *Breakin' Convention*; international and U.S.-based artist presentations focused on a specific theme; and Special Projects, 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 Michael Jackson, Ella Fitzgerald, Stevie Wonder, Billie Holiday, James Brown, D'Angelo, Lauryn Hill, Dave Chappelle, Machine Gun Kelly, Miri Ben Ari, Sarah Vaughan, Gladys Knight, and Luther Vandross; and the Apollo's forward-looking artistic vision continues to build on this legacy. For more information visit <https://www.apollotheater.org/>

#### **About Baltimore Center Stage**

Baltimore Center Stage is a theater committed to artistic excellence. We engage, enrich, and broaden the perspectives of diverse audiences through entertaining and thought-provoking work and educational programs. Named the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage has steadily grown as a leader in the national regional theater scene. Under Executive Director Michael Ross, Baltimore Center Stage is committed to creating and presenting a diverse array of world premieres and exhilarating interpretations of established works. Baltimore Center Stage believes in access for all—creating a welcoming environment for everyone who enters its doors and, at the same time, striving to meet audiences where they are. In addition to Mainstage and Third Space productions in the historic Mount Vernon neighborhood, Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations across Baltimore and beyond through the Mobile Unit, which brings high-quality theater to economically, culturally and geographically diverse communities. The theater also nurtures the next generation of artists and theatergoers through the Young Playwrights Festival, Student Matinee Series, and many other educational programs for students, families, and educators.

#### **About Congo Square Theatre Company**

Congo Square Theater Company is an ensemble-based entity that seeks to broaden the scope of the theater-going experience. The ensemble's effort matches education and the performances of productions that push the envelope in the telling of the diverse stories from within the African Diaspora - that ultimately resonate throughout humanity.

For more on Congo Square Theatre Company – visit [www.congosquaretheatre.org](http://www.congosquaretheatre.org)

#### **About Mosaic Theater Company of DC**

Independent, intercultural, entertaining, and uncensored, Mosaic Theater Company of DC is committed to making transformational, socially-relevant art, producing plays by authors on the front lines of conflict zones, and building a fusion community to address some of the most pressing issues of our times. Dedicated to making our theater a model of diversity and inclusion at every strata, on stage and off, Mosaic invests in the new as we keep abreast of our changing and challenging times to ensure that our theater is a responsive gathering space, all the while nurturing and producing art of the highest order. For more information, visit <http://www.mosaictheater.org/>

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