



**Apollo Theater and WNYC Present
“MLK and the Fierce Urgency of Now!”**

**Special Radio Edition of WNYC’s 15th Annual MLK Celebration
to Air Nationally on Monday, January 18, on *The Takeaway***

Presented with a simulcast on Apollo Theater and WNYC Facebook Live pages

**Guests include Representative JAMES E. CLYBURN; DR. BERNARD LAFAYETTE, JR.,
Co-Founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee;
REVEREND DR. WILLIAM BARBER, II, Co-Chair of The Poor People’s Campaign;
New York Attorney General LETITIA JAMES; and NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES,
Creator of *The New York Times’ 1619 Project***

Co-Hosted by WNYC’s BRIAN LEHRER, JAMI FLOYD, and TANZINA VEGA

Harlem, NY – (January 11, 2021) – As New York City’s performance spaces remain dark, the **Apollo Theater** and **WNYC** are bringing a special edition of the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration, presented as part of the Apollo Theater’s Uptown Hall Series, to the national airwaves and digitally via Facebook live.

This year’s presentation, “**MLK and the Fierce Urgency of Now!**” will air on *The Takeaway* — the national news program from WNYC and PRX — on **Monday, January 18, 3-4pm ET on WNYC 93.9 FM and on 270 additional radio stations across the country** (check local listings). The special broadcast will be co-hosted by the event’s signature hosts — WNYC’s public affairs host **Brian Lehrer** and Senior Editor of WNYC’s Race and Justice Unit **Jami Floyd** — who will be joined by **Tanzina Vega**, host of *The Takeaway*. It will also be shared as a video simulcast on Facebook Live at 3pm ET on the [Apollo Theater](#) and [WNYC](#) Facebook pages. The video version of the program will include introductions from **Jonelle Procope**, President and CEO of the Apollo Theater; **Goli Sheikholeslami**, President and CEO of New York Public Radio; and **Isisara Bey**, Artistic Director of the March on Washington Film Festival. The recording will also be available following the simulcast on [the Apollo’s Digital Stage](#).

“**MLK and the Fierce Urgency of Now!**” convenes an impressive roster of civil rights leaders, elected officials, activists, journalists, and artists to engage with Dr. King’s teachings and philosophies, and incorporate them into present-day social justice movements. Guests will discuss the pressing priorities facing the incoming Biden/Harris administration, strategies to remove barriers to health equity for Black Americans, and what comes next in our nation’s ongoing fight against systemic racism.

Featured guests include:

- **Congressman James E. Clyburn**, Democratic member of the U.S. House of Representatives from South Carolina
- **Reverend Dr. William Barber, II**, President of Repairers of the Breach and Co-Chair of The Poor People’s Campaign

- **Dr. Bernard Lafayette, Jr.**, Civil Rights activist and Co-Founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
- **Nikole Hannah-Jones**, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and creator of *The New York Times' 1619 Project*
- **Letitia James**, Attorney General for the State of New York
- **Dr. Uche Blackstock**, *Yahoo! News* Medical Contributor and Founder & CEO of Advancing Health Equity
- **Dr. Jeff Gardere**, Associate Professor of Behavioral Medicine at Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine
- **Queen Afua**, Five-time best-selling author and CEO of the Queen Afua Wellness Center
- **Leslé Honoré**, Blaxican artist and activist, who will read from her book of poems *Fist & Fire*

“I’m thrilled that we are continuing our partnership with WNYC to bring people together to hear from some of today’s most poignant leaders, activists, journalists, and scholars reflecting on Dr. King’s legacy and the urgent need to continue to fight for safety, dignity, and justice,” said **Jonelle Procope, Apollo Theater President and CEO**. “The Apollo has long been committed to supporting Black voices and creating spaces for artists and audiences to express themselves freely, and the annual MLK Celebration has been one of the hallmarks of our programming.”

“I’m so proud that this year marks WNYC’s 15th anniversary of bringing New Yorkers vital conversations about race and justice on Dr. King’s birthday,” said **Brenda Williams-Butts, Senior Vice President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at New York Public Radio and Co-Founder of WNYC’s annual Martin Luther King, Jr. event**. “We founded this event to provide a place to celebrate his life, but also discuss the serious work still at hand. Fifteen years later — as a new administration, whose victory owes much to Black voters, prepares to take control in the wake of a far-right insurrection on the Capitol — ‘the fierce urgency of now’ has taken on even more profound resonance.”

“We’re excited to partner with the Apollo to bring our annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. event to the national airwaves at a moment when we so deeply need to channel his legacy, leadership, and lessons,” said **Goli Sheikholeslami, President and CEO, New York Public Radio**. “WNYC’s mission is to convene conversation and community around the critical issues of the day, and we’re honored to bring our listeners the voices of so many respected leaders and changemakers at this inflection point in America’s democracy.”

Presented in collaboration with the March on Washington Film Festival.

ABOUT 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 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 www.apollotheater.org.

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.

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