

# APOLLO

The Apollo Presents  
***KWANZAA: A REGENERATION CELEBRATION***  
**VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26 AT 7:00 PM EST**

**On Demand through January 3**

**Featuring a world premiere from  
Abdel R. Salaam's Forces of Nature Dance Theatre**

**With a musical performance by Soul Science Lab with  
Chen Lo & Asante Amin**

**Hosted by Imhotep Gary Byrd**



A Kwanzaa celebration performance in 2019. Photo courtesy the Apollo

**Harlem, NY** – November 15, 2021 – On **Sunday, December 26 at 7:00 pm EST**, the Apollo will celebrate its annual Kwanzaa celebration, ***Kwanzaa: A Regeneration Celebration***, featuring a world premiere from renowned New York-based dance company Abdel Salaam's **Forces of Nature Dance Theatre** and performances from *Apollo New Work* artists **Soul Science Lab** with **Chen Lo** and **Asante Amin**. For more than 15 years, the Apollo has presented an annual Kwanzaa festival performance during the seven-day

celebration of African American culture. This year, Forces of Nature Dance Theatre will produce a unique **digital event** of dance and music honoring the seven principles of Kwanzaa, the Nguzo Saba. The event, hosted by award-winning radio host and annual Apollo Kwanzaa emcee **Imhotep Gary Byrd**, will be streamed on the Apollo Digital Stage. The program is pay what you wish and will be on demand through January 3.

“We’re thrilled to celebrate Kwanzaa virtually and provide a space to unite our Apollo community for a time of celebration and reflection,” said Apollo Theater Executive Producer **Kamilah Forbes**. “We look forward to premiering new work by the internationally acclaimed and award-winning Forces of Nature, bringing an invigorating and multi-generational experience of contemporary dance to our audiences.”

Bringing together dance, music, and poetry to honor the seven core principles of Kwanzaa through special performances, participants will reflect on the seven basic principles that focus on recommitting to the collective achievement of a better life for families, community, and Black people overall. The *Kwanzaa Celebration* will be anchored by Abdel R. Salaam’s Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, who blend contemporary modern, West African, house, and hip-hop dance styles, and will feature two works, the **world premiere of “Spirit: Nguzo Saba”** and **“Earth Born,”** both choreographed by company co-founder and artistic director Abdel R. Salaam.

The new dance piece, **“Spirit: Nguzo Saba”** was created especially for this celebration of Kwanzaa and includes special guests: spoken word performer Javier Gooden, percussionist Michael Wimberly, balafonist Famoro Dioubate, and Louise Robinson and Carol Maillard, members of a cappella ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock, along with a musical performance from Soul Science Lab, a music and multimedia duo powered by emcee/songwriter Chen Lo and composer/producer Asante Amin.

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga as a response to the commercialism of Christmas and a way to focus on building community. Kwanzaa is observed from December 26 to January 1, during which time participants reflect on seven basic principles—Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith).

Since 2006, the Apollo has presented an annual event to celebrate this holiday tradition during Kwanzaa with families and communities from across New York’s five boroughs and the tri-state area. As it did in 2020, the Apollo will offer the event virtually, connecting African American communities across the country. Learn more at [apollotheater.org](http://apollotheater.org).

### **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 and 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, 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](http://www.ApolloTheater.org).

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## **SUPPORT**

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