

APOLLO

Apollo Theater Presents

KWANZAA CELEBRATION: REGENERATION NIGHT A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

**Featuring Abdel R. Salaam's Forces of Nature Dance Theatre,
With Special Guests Mumu Fresh, Marc Bamuthi Joseph,
Members of the Harlem Children's Zone and more
Hosted by Imhotep Gary Byrd**

Sunday, December 27 at 7:00 PM

Harlem, NY – December 7, 2020 – The Apollo Theater announced today the line-up for its annual *Kwanzaa Celebration: Regeneration Night*, which brings together dance, music, and poetry to honor the seven core principles of Kwanzaa including family, community, and culture. On Sunday, December 27 at 7:00 p.m. ET, the Apollo's *Kwanzaa Celebration* will feature special performances by **Abdel R. Salaam's Forces of Nature Dance Theatre** with special guests spoken word artist **Mumu Fresh**, poet **Marc Bamuthi Joseph**, and members of the **Forces of Nature Dance Theatre** and **Harlem Children's Zone Youth Academy of Dance and Wellness**, hosted by award-winning radio host and Apollo Kwanzaa mainstay **Imhotep Gary Byrd**. The event will be streamed for free digitally on the [Apollo Digital Stage](#).

Kwanzaa is an African-American cultural celebration, which is observed from December 26 to January 1. Participants reflect on seven basic principles that focus on recommitting to the collective achievement of a better life for families, community, and Black people overall. Kwanzaa was introduced in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga as a response to the commercialism of Christmas and to focus on building community.

“We’re thrilled to unite our Apollo community virtually and create a space for celebration and reflection during Kwanzaa, in what was certainly a challenging year,” said Apollo Theater Executive Producer **Kamilah Forbes**. “Ujima, the third principle of Kwanzaa, stresses the need for togetherness and collective work during difficult times, and the Apollo’s celebration will be a joyful evening of music, performance, and Black culture.

During the evening, *Kwanzaa Celebration: Regeneration Night* will premiere *Dawnfeather Rising: In The Age of Ma'att*, new choreography by the critically acclaimed Abdel Salaam's Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, who blend contemporary modern, West African, house and hip-hop dance styles. Imhotep Gary Byrd will introduce the Nguzo Saba, the seven pillars of Kwanzaa, bringing together community around traditional African principles with Apollo Theater Executive Producer Kamilah Forbes and friends of the Apollo who include Billy Mitchell (Mr. Apollo), Sade Lythcott (CEO of the National Black Theater), South African producer Duma Ndluvo, Chief Ayanda Clarke (Founder and CEO of THE FADARA GROUP), former NYC Poet Laureate Camryn Bruno, and youth motivational speaker Javier Gooden. In addition, the evening will feature a spoken word piece by singer, songwriter, and rapper Mumu Fresh, Kwanzaa traditions from around the country, and original poetry read by playwright and poet Marc Bamuthi Joseph,

who was featured in both the Apollo's stage adaptation of Ta-Nehisi Coates' memoir *Between the World and Me* and HBO's theatrical adaptation that was released in November of this year.

Since 2006, the Apollo has presented this annual event to celebrate this holiday tradition during Kwanzaa with families and communities from across New York's five boroughs. To continue the tradition while theaters across the world remain closed, the Apollo will launch the event virtually on December 27, connecting African American communities across the country during an unprecedented and challenging year.

The event is free to the public, but as a non-profit organization, the Apollo depends on the generous funding from donors, foundations, and the community at-large. Please consider donating to the Apollo Theater in support of these free virtual programs. To do so, please click <https://www.apollotheater.org/donate>.

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 Master Artist-in-Residence Ta-Nehisi Coates' *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 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 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.

SUPPORT

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