

# APOLLO

**Apollo Theater's 2017 – 2018 Season  
Features Commissions and Collaborations  
with Artists from Harlem and Around the Globe**

**First Full Season Under Direction of  
Executive Producer Kamilah Forbes includes:**

***We Shall Not Be Moved***

*New York Premiere of Genre-Defying Opera Directed by Bill T. Jones  
With Music by Daniel Bernard Roumain, Libretto by Marc Bamuthi Joseph  
Inspired By the Legacy of the 1985 MOVE Bombing in Philadelphia*

*The Return of the Global Hip-Hop Dance Theater Festival **Breakin' Convention**  
Featuring South Africa's **Soweto Skeleton Movers***

*Multimedia Experience **Soundtrack '63**, Presenting a Live Documentary  
Illuminates Lasting Impact of the American Civil Rights Movement with Performances by  
Soul Science Lab Duo Chen Lo, and Asante Amin*

*A Theatrical Performance Event of Celebrated Writer **Ta-Nehisi Coates'**  
**Between the World and Me** with Music Commissioned by **Jason Moran***

*Signature Programs **Apollo Music Café, Apollo Comedy Club,**  
**Amateur Night at the Apollo, and Ongoing Education & Community Programs***

**(Harlem, NY – April 26, 2017)** – The Apollo Theater today announced details of its upcoming 2017–2018 season. Marking the first full season with Executive Producer Kamilah Forbes at the helm of the legendary theater's artistic and community programs, it will encompass commissions, premieres, and collaborations with local, national, and international artists working across a range of disciplines and genres—from dance and theater to jazz, soul, and opera. More than 100 performances are scheduled for the new season as the nonprofit theater continues to expand its 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.

The Theater's season opens with the New York premiere of the genre-defying opera *We Shall Not Be Moved* from composer Daniel Bernard Roumain, librettist Marc Bamuthi Joseph, and director/choreographer Bill T. Jones. Inspired by the 1985 MOVE crisis in Philadelphia, where a standoff between police and a Black liberation group resulted in the deadly bombing and destruction of homes in a residential neighborhood, the opera will explore the legacy of those experiences through a contemporary lens. The opera's world premiere will occur in September at Opera Philadelphia's O17 festival, with its New York premiere at the Apollo in October 2017 before it goes on to Hackney Empire in London.

The season also includes the return of Sadler's Wells' critically acclaimed international festival of hip-hop dance theater **Breakin' Convention**. The program, which provides a platform for the Apollo to celebrate its hip-hop roots

and highlight the global impact of contemporary hip-hop culture through both mainstream and experimental dance, showcasing explosive energy, intricate step sequences, synchronicity and choreography, is presented in partnership with Sadler's Wells in London.

The season will continue in the spring with **Soundtrack '63**, a multimedia live music performance that takes the audience back in time, with a cultural and artistic retrospective from 1963 to the present-day Black Lives Matter Movement. Developed by Creative Director **Chen Lo**, *Soundtrack '63* musically tells the untold and under-told stories of civil rights history and the Black experience in America through compelling images, video, jazz, hip-hop, soul, and poetry. The production features spirituals, protest songs, and popular music throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century performed by an 18-piece orchestra and dynamic vocal chamber, conducted by Musical Director **Asante Amin**. *Soundtrack '63* will be a part of the Carnegie Hall citywide festival *The '60s: The Years that Changed America*.

Another highlight of the season is a multimedia performance event bringing **Ta-Nehisi Coates'** award-winning book *Between the World and Me* to the stage through music, drama, and video. Under the artistic direction of Apollo Executive Producer **Kamilah Forbes** and Kennedy Center Artistic Director for Jazz, Academy Award Nominee, and MacArthur Fellow **Jason Moran**, the piece will bring a vital work of American literature to the stage for the first time.

"In my first season as Executive Producer of the Apollo Theater, we are presenting an engaging series of new works from a number of the strongest and most innovative voices in performance today," said Apollo Executive Producer **Kamilah Forbes**. "Working with such visionaries and thought leaders as Bill T. Jones, Jason Moran, and Ta-Nehisi Coates, our programming will shine a powerful light on pivotal and challenging moments including the Civil Rights Movement, the MOVE bombing in Philadelphia, and recent events across the country to frame and foster meaningful engagement with the issues of our time."

The new programs will be complemented by the Apollo's signature series: *Amateur Night at the Apollo*, the Theater's original talent competition; *Apollo Music Café*, which showcases boundary-pushing, new musical artists; *Apollo Comedy Club*, an initiative which features up-and-coming comedic artists; and *Salon Series*, a one-week residency in which artists from across disciplines develop and test new works, culminating in public workshop performances. A cornerstone of the Harlem community, the Apollo will also present public conversations, education programs for students and families, and other community events throughout the season.

*Tickets go on sale Friday, May 19. Tickets may be purchased at the Apollo Theater Box Office: (212) 531-5305, 253 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).*

## APOLLO THEATER 2017 – 2018 SEASON

### **SEASON HIGHLIGHTS**

#### ***We Shall Not Be Moved***

Co-commissioned and co-produced with Opera Philadelphia and Hackney Empire; developed in partnership with Art Sanctuary

Friday, October 6 – 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 7 – 8:00 p.m.

This genre-defying opera follows five North Philly teens who are on the run after a series of tragic incidents and find refuge in an abandoned, condemned house in West Philadelphia. The home sits at the exact location that served as headquarters of the MOVE organization when, in 1985, a standoff with police infamously ended with a neighborhood destroyed and 11 people dead, including five children. This self-defined family is assuaged and even inspired by the ghosts who inhabit their Osage Avenue home and begin to see their squatting as a matter of destiny and resistance rather than self-preservation.

*We Shall Not Be Moved* will be the first operatic commission for composer **Daniel Bernard Roumain**—the acclaimed Haitian-American composer—and librettist and arts activist **Marc Bamuthi Joseph. Bill T. Jones**, the celebrated choreographer, theater director, and dancer whose accolades include a MacArthur Fellowship, two Tony Awards, a Kennedy Center Honor, and a 2013 National Medal of Arts, will serve as director and dramaturg for the project.

Combining spoken word, contemporary movement, video projection, classical, R&B and jazz singing, and a brooding, often joyful score filled with place, purpose, and possibility, *We Shall Not Be Moved* is a timely exploration of past and present struggles that suggests an alternate future through the eyes of its young protagonists.

The cast includes spoken-word artist **Lauren Whitehead** making her company debut as Un/Sung, the self-appointed leader of the family; **John Holiday**, described as an “impressive young countertenor” (*The New York Times*), as John Blue; and **Kirstin Chávez** in the role of Glenda, a Philadelphia police officer whose encounter with the family leads to a standoff that could threaten to repeat history. Bass-baritone **Aubrey Allicock** co-stars as John Henry, with baritone **Adam Richardson** as John Mack and tenor **Daniel Shirley** as John Little.

**Breakin’ Convention: Sadler’s Wells International Festival of Hip Hop Dance Theatre**

Friday, October 27 – School Time Performance – 11:30 a.m.

Friday, October 27 – 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 28 – 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 29 – 3:00 p.m.

In 2013, the Apollo launched its first global festival with the successful and innovative hip-hop dance theater festival *Breakin’ Convention*, a partnership with London’s Sadler’s Wells, which provides a platform for the Apollo to celebrate its hip-hops roots and to highlight current hip-hop culture and its global impact. The festival will offer a packed program of everything from mainstream to experimental dance, showcasing all the hallmarks of the genre: explosive energy, intricate step sequences, synchronicity, and choreography.

Curated and hosted by Sadler’s Wells Associate Artist **Jonzi D**, and presented in collaboration with London’s Sadler’s Wells, the festival will return to the Apollo for the U.S. edition of *Breakin’ Convention* with exciting new performances and activities that will take over the legendary Theater for one week, featuring the best dance artists and companies from New York City, the U.S., and around the globe.

The Apollo will also host auditions for local artists to participate in *Breakin’ Convention* online May 29 – June 11.

International performances taking part in *Breakin’ Convention* at the Apollo 2017 include:

**Yeah Yellow** (France) An explosive b-boy crew from France, YY brings agility, creativity, and invention to the BC stage. Bodies create orifices to dive through, and re-form physical shapes with muscular alchemy.

**Protocol** (UK) Lanre Malouda directs as well as performs in this duet that explores racial dynamics. Popping and tutting techniques, as well as text and physical theater, are used to present ideas that reflect the tensions in our community today.

**Salah** (France) A living legend in the world of hip-hop dance, this consummate performer is a master popper, locker, b-boy, clown, and all-around entertainer. Known for his amazing battle abilities, Salah will present his theater piece *The Sickness*.

**Soweto Skeleton Movers** (South Africa) From the most notorious township on the African continent come the Soweto Skeleton Movers. The audience highlight of *Breakin’ Convention* 2016 returns with a brand-new show. Experts in a particular form of pantsula dance developed by Skeleton Mover pioneer Jabulani, the crew use comedic contortionism and frenetic footwork.

### **Ballet Hispanico**

Friday, December 1 – School Time Performance – 11:30 a.m.

Friday, December 1 – 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 2 – 8:00 p.m.

Ballet Hispanico, the nation's premier Latino dance organization, in collaboration with the Apollo Theater, presents *Con Brazos Abiertos*, choreographed by Michelle Manzanales, an exploration of iconic Mexican symbols that she was reluctant to embrace as a Mexican-American child growing up in Texas. Intertwining folkloric details with a distinct voice, set to music that ranges from Julio Iglesias to rock en español, *Con Brazos Abiertos* is a fun and frank look at a life caught between two cultures. The company will also present audience favorites from its repertoire.

Additional Ballet Hispanico programs at the Apollo include special Apollo Education performances with *Apollo School Day Live* and *Family Showtime*.

Tickets are available at The Apollo Theater Box Office: (212) 531-5305, 253 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com). **Tickets are on sale now.**

For more information on Apollo School Day Live and Apollo Family Workshop, visit [www.apolloeducation.org](http://www.apolloeducation.org).

### **Kwanzaa Celebration: Regeneration Night** featuring Abel R. Salaam's Forces of Nature Dance Theatre

Saturday, December 30, 2017 – 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Since 2006, the Apollo has established an annual show to celebrate this holiday tradition on one day of the Kwanzaa holiday. The Apollo's celebration is a joyful evening of dance and music honoring the principles of Kwanzaa—family, community, and culture.

### **Apollo Uptown Hall** WNYC – MLK Tribute

Sunday, January 14, 2018

The Apollo Theater continues to be a gathering place and 'town hall' for local community residents as well as people from all across New York City. The Apollo Theater and WNYC present the radio station's longstanding annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration as part of the Apollo's *Uptown Hall* series. Co-hosted by Brian Lehrer and Jami Floyd and marking the last year of King's life, this free event brings together audiences from Harlem and around the city with scholars, community leaders, and activists to engage in conversations examining the future of social justice movements following the 2016 election and the inauguration of a new President of the United States.

### **Soundtrack '63 Concert**

Saturday, February 24, 2018 – 8:00 p.m.

*Soundtrack '63*, a live orchestral performance, multimedia production, and cultural and artistic retrospective celebrating the Civil Rights Movement, from 1963 and the Black empowerment songs of James Brown to the today's Black Lives Matter Movement and outcries for justice for Mike Brown. Under the direction of creative director Chen Lo and Musical Director Asante Amin, *Soundtrack '63* includes a host of dynamic performance artists whose work breathes new life into the sights and sounds that shaped the music of an era, including jazz, hip-hop, soul, and poetry.

A captivating video installation of archival footage and animation serve as the backdrop for the soundtrack, which includes commentary by **Dr. Cornel West**, and renowned poets **Sonia Sanchez** and **Abiodun Oyewole** of **The Last Poets**.

*Soundtrack '63* will be presented during the Carnegie Hall citywide '60s project.

### **Africa Now!**

March 2018

Presented in partnership with World Music Institute, this annual concert, a highlight of the Apollo's season, celebrates the best of today's African music scene.

### **Between the World and Me**

April 2018

A multimedia performance event bringing **Ta-Nehisi Coates'** award-winning book *Between the World and Me* to the stage through music, drama, and video. Under the artistic direction of Apollo Executive Producer **Kamilah Forbes**, and Kennedy Center Artistic Director of Jazz and MacArthur 'Genius' Award recipient **Jason Moran**, this production will include a number of notable performers (musicians, actors, and readers) and will feature newly composed music by Mr. Moran, newly imagined dramaturgy and direction by Ms. Forbes, and interactive production/visual storytelling by projection media artists. The live performance event will be a presentation of excerpted selections, read monologue-style by notable guest artists, interspersed with music and visual projection design. The performance is an opportunity to extend the conversation around race and politics in America through intimate performance and creative expressions.

*Tickets for the Apollo's 2017–18 Season go on sale Friday, May 19. Tickets may be purchased at the Apollo Theater Box Office: (212) 531-5305, 253 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).*

## **SIGNATURE PROGRAMS**

### **Amateur Night at the Apollo**

*Weekly, Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. through November 22, 2017*

The Apollo Theater's signature program, *Amateur Night*, continues to be a resource for discovering new talent and a defining experience for many emerging artists. The show has launched countless careers since 1934—from Ella Fitzgerald, James Brown, Michael Jackson, D'Angelo, Jazmine Sullivan, and Lauryn Hill, to recent winners like Matthew Whitaker, Machine Gun Kelly, and Matthew Hashimoto.

*Amateur Night's 2017 – 2018 Season runs through November 22, 2017 on Wednesday nights at 7:30 p.m., and will feature the following special editions:*

#### ***Amateur Night: Super Top Dog***

*Wednesday, November 22, 2017*

*Amateur Night* culminates its season with the final showdown: Super Top Dog. The winner will receive the title of Super Top Dog and a grand prize of \$20,000. In addition, the Child Star of Tomorrow winner will receive \$5,000.

#### ***Amateur Night Holiday Special***

*Saturday, December 9, 2017*

The Apollo Theater lights up this holiday season with the *Apollo Amateur Night Holiday Special*, the sixth annual event under its signature program *Amateur Night*, showcasing recent winners of the show's "Apollo Stars of Tomorrow" category. Featuring an incredibly talented array of instrumentalists, singers, and dancers from ages 11–18, this program captures the spirit of young performers hoping to follow in the footsteps of Apollo legends like Michael Jackson and Ella Fitzgerald, whose careers were launched on the stage of the Apollo. Featuring: Apollo Stars of Tomorrow and Special Guest Performances.

#### ***Amateur Night: Season Opener***

*Wednesday, February 21, 2018*

*Amateur Night* returns for its 83<sup>rd</sup> year with a new lineup of contestants competing to win the title of Super Top Dog and a prize. Hosted by the comedian **Capone**, *Amateur Night* begins with a pre-party featuring video and music by **DJ Jess**. The show also features master impressionist and tap dancer **CP Lacey** as the "Executioner," who escorts contestants who have been booed off the stage; and the *Amateur Night* house band, led by Music Director **Michael Mitchell**.

*Tickets for Amateur Night begin at \$20 and are available 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.*

*Tickets for the Amateur Night Holiday Special are \$20, \$26, and \$32. Tickets will be available at The Apollo Theater Box Office: (212) 531-5305, 253 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com). Tickets are on sale now.*

### **Apollo Music Cafe**

Apollo Theater Soundstage  
October 2017 – June 2018

The Music Café is designed to attract intergenerational and forward-thinking artists and audiences alike. Featuring diverse performances across a myriad of genres (R&B, hip hop, soul, jazz, pop, funk, and rock), the monthly series introduces new artists or musical projects to the local music circuit.

*Tickets for Apollo Music Café are \$20 and \$15 in advance for the Apollo's A-List. There is a \$10 drink/food minimum for each show. Tickets will be available at the Apollo Theater Box Office: (212) 531-5305, 253 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com). Tickets are on sale now.*

### **Apollo Comedy Club**

Apollo Theater Soundstage  
October 2017 – June 2018

The *Apollo Comedy Club* sees the iconic Theater returning to its comedic roots as it further expands its robust programming offerings. Presented in partnership with **Bob Sumner** (producer of *Def Comedy Jam*, creator of *Laff Mobb on Aspire*), the *Apollo Comedy Club* will feature an evening of comedy on the Apollo's intimate Soundstage starring the best up-and-coming talent in comedy today. The comedy shows will precede the Theater's weekend music series, *Apollo Music Café*, extending the Theater's late-night offerings.

*Tickets for Apollo Comedy Club are \$20 and \$15 in advance for the Apollo's A-List. There is a \$10 drink/food minimum for each show. Tickets will be available at the Apollo Theater Box Office: (212) 531-5305, 253 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, and Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com). Tickets are on sale now.*

### **Salon Series**

Apollo Theater Soundstage

Expanding on the Apollo's tradition of nurturing artists and providing critical support in their creation of new work, the Theater's *Salon Series* acts as an incubator for artists to develop and test new work across disciplines. Artists presented in the *Salon Series* have the opportunity to develop their work for a full week on the Apollo's Soundstage (150-seat black-box theater), culminating in workshop performances.

## **HOLIDAYS AT THE APOLLO**

A celebration of holiday traditions and special programming to include:

### **Coca-Cola Winter Wonderland**

Saturday, December 9, 2017 – 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Before the *Apollo Amateur Night Holiday Special*, the Apollo and Coca-Cola are partnering to bring the magic of the holiday season to Harlem. Under the Apollo's iconic marquee, Coca-Cola will offer a variety of holiday-themed activities and performances free and open to the public. Hosted by **Billy Mitchell**, Apollo tour director and in-house historian, festivities include picture-taking with Santa Claus and giveaways. Additionally, in the spirit of giving, the Apollo will be a designated location for a toy drive.



*This event is free and open to the public.*

**Amateur Night Holiday Special**

Saturday, December 9, 2017 – 7:30 p.m.

*(For description see Signature Programs: Amateur Night at the Apollo.)*

**Kwanzaa Celebration: Regeneration Night –**

Saturday, December 30, 2017 – 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

*(For description see Season Highlights: Kwanzaa*

**EDUCATION & EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The Apollo Theater's Education & Community Programs extend the Apollo's commitment to serve as a resource and gathering place for the entire community. The nonprofit Theater's education program includes events for school children and families, as well as career development for teens and adults through the Apollo Theater Academy. Both the Apollo's education program and its community program include discussions on cultural and civic issues important to the Harlem community that highlight the history of the Apollo and its impact on American art, culture, and entertainment. Events and programs include:

**COMMUNITY PROGRAMS**

**Apollo Uptown Hall**

The Apollo continues to be a natural gathering place and 'town hall' for local community residents as well as people from across New York City. This was demonstrated by the huge crowds that gathered under the Theater's iconic marquee in response to world events such as the 2008 presidential election outcome and the passing of James Brown and Michael Jackson. Launched in September 2012, the Apollo Uptown Hall is a forum for presenting and discussing timely issues relevant to the community, the country, and the world, incorporating video, texting, and live performance to enhance and develop an interactive forum for community gathering and discussion.

**A Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute**

Sunday, January 14, 2018 – 3:00 p.m.

In celebration of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, WNYC's annual Martin Luther King Day celebration will return to the Apollo for a special edition of the Apollo's *Uptown Hall* series. The series brings together community members, leaders, scholars, and activists to engage in conversation about Dr. King's legacy and how his teachings affect us today. WNYC's Brian Lehrer will co-host this free event.

*Apollo Uptown Hall: A Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute is a WNYC and Apollo Theater presentation.*

**Apollo Open House**

Saturday, February 3, 2018 – 2:00 p.m.

In celebration of Black History Month, the Apollo Theater open its doors to give members of the Harlem community, New York City residents, and tourists alike a unique and FREE glimpse at the Apollo's rich history during our Open House. This event also provides insight on current and upcoming activities programs at the Apollo as well as other local organizations.

*Apollo Open House events are free and open to the public.*

**APOLLO ON TOUR**

### ***Ella: Now & Then with Patti Austin***

Presented in association with The Apollo Theater

Sunday, September 24

Grammy-winning artist **Patti Austin**, hosts an all-star evening celebrating Ella Fitzgerald's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Apollo introduced Ella to the world in 1934 when she won the *Amateur Night at The Apollo* contest at the age of 17. During her lifelong career, she made her mark as one of the greatest scat singers in jazz history. She earned 14 Grammy Awards and collaborated with Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, among many others. Patti Austin has been wowing audiences since her own childhood debut at the Apollo. In celebration of Ella's centennial birthday, Patti and friends will pay tribute to the First Lady of Song.

*Ella: Now & Then* is produced in collaboration with seven-time Grammy-winning producer Gregg Field, who at the age of 24 toured as the drummer for Ella Fitzgerald.

***You can follow the Apollo Theater on Twitter and Instagram at @apollotheater and like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/apollotheater](https://www.facebook.com/apollotheater).***

### **SUPPORT**

*The Apollo's season is made possible by generous support from Coca-Cola, Citi, Time Warner, the Howard Gilman Foundation, and the Jerome L. Greene Foundation.*

*Leadership support for Apollo Education Programs provided by the Ronald O. Perelman Family Foundation, Coca-Cola Foundation, and The Jerome L. Greene Foundation.*

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*Amateur Night at the Apollo is sponsored by Coca-Cola.*

### **About the Apollo Theater**

The legendary Apollo Theater—the soul of American culture—plays a vital role in cultivating emerging talents 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 October 2014 premiere and 2015 international tour of the dance celebration project *James Brown: Get on the Good Foot*, the annual Africa Now! Festival, and the recent New York premiere of the opera *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD*. The Apollo is a presenting organization that also produces festivals and large-scale dance and music works organized around a set of core initiatives: *Apollo Music Signature Programs—Amateur Night, Salon Series, Apollo Music Café; Legacy Series*—work that celebrates and extends 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 work 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 D'Angelo, Lauryn Hill, Machine Gun Kelly, Miri Ben Ari, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, James Brown, Michael Jackson, Gladys Knight, Luther Vandross, and Stevie Wonder; and the Apollo's forward-looking artistic vision continues to build on this legacy.

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