

APOLLO

Institutional Background

The Apollo Theater is one of the most dynamic cultural institutions in New York City, nurturing emerging talent, serving as a testing ground for artists working in a variety of genres, and celebrating its cross-cultural legacy for contemporary audiences. A distinctive American landmark, it is one of the only institutions in the nation where emerging talent and legendary performers share the same stage, becoming part of an exceptional community of musicians and artists. Throughout its celebrated legacy, the Apollo has consistently been a model of innovation and excellence and a creative catalyst and anchor for Harlem, the city of New York, and the nation.

The nonprofit institution's initiatives include programs in three core areas—performing arts, education, and community. The Apollo's seasonal programming includes signature series' *Apollo Music Café* and *Amateur Night*, which continues to launch the careers of countless performers—including recent winners D'Angelo, Jasmine Sullivan, and Lauryn Hill; special presentations featuring artists from around the globe working in a variety of disciplines; as well as public conversations and educational activities for students and families.

The Apollo Theater also serves as a laboratory for artists to push the boundaries of their artistic forms, drawing upon its legacy as an institution that has ushered in the emergence of new, distinctly American, musical genres—including jazz, swing, bebop, R&B, gospel, blues, soul, funk, and hip-hop. The institution's new works incubation initiative, the *Salon Series*, grants artists the opportunity to develop new work on the Theater's soundstage and bring audiences into their creative process with workshop performances.

Deepening its partnerships with artists and audiences in Harlem, nationwide and internationally, these initiatives are supported in large part by the 21st Century Apollo Campaign, launched in 2013 with a \$20 million fundraising goal to help ensure the Theater remains a vital cultural center and an artistic and economic cornerstone of the Harlem community.

The Apollo was one of the first theaters in New York—and in America—to welcome integrated audiences, opening its doors in 1934 to the local communities of African-American, Hispanic, and other immigrant populations. The Theater provided important performance opportunities for talented, emerging entertainers who found it difficult to gain entrance to other venues of similar size and resources. The Apollo continues to celebrate the work of up-and-coming artists from all backgrounds—extending its reach internationally with initiatives like the annual *Africa Now! Festival*, the *Women of the World* (WOW) Festival, *Breakin' Convention*, the institution's first international tour, the original production *James Brown: Get on the Good Foot—A Celebration in Dance*.