

APOLLO

Apollo Theater and AFROPUNK

Present

Kamasi Washington

Saturday, February 23rd, 8:00 p.m.

Part of *Race Music* Weekend

Feb. 21-23

Including films curated by ImageNation Cinema Foundation and a special screening of *Mr. Soul!* presented in collaboration with Firelight Media

Harlem, NY, December 5, 2018 –Apollo Theater in partnership with AFROPUNK present *Race Music*, a powerful weekend that will explore the intersection of music, film and politics. The series will be anchored by a special performance by the incomparable **Kamasi Washington** on **Saturday, February 23 at 8:00 p.m.** Considered a torchbearer for progressive, improvisational music and critically acclaimed for his afro-futuristic vision of spirituality and music, Washington and his band, **The Next Step**, will take the audience on an odyssey that will cross musical genres from jazz, to hip-hop, classical and R&B music. For this special evening, Washington will perform music from his latest double album, *Heaven and Earth*. *The New Yorker* praised the album, saying “In another life, the saxophonist Washington might have been a film director specializing in grandiose productions...Drawing on the inclusive spirit of seventies soul jazz and utilizing massed strings, vocals, and a contingent of eclectic improvisers, Washington creates his effect by painting with sweeping brushstrokes.”

Beyond *Heaven and Earth* and his rapturously received 2015 debut *The Epic*, Washington’s recent projects include *Harmony of Difference*, an EP and standalone multimedia installation during the prestigious 2017 Whitney Museum Biennial as well as collaborations with Kendrick Lamar, Florence + the Machine, John Legend, Run the Jewels, Ibeyi and many more.

Apollo Theater Executive Producer Kamilah Forbes noted, “As the Apollo continues its season long, SAY IT LOUD theme, it is important for the Theater to partner with other organizations like AFROPUNK and artists like Kamasi Washington who value and celebrate the contributions Black artists have made to every facet of culture.”

Matthew Morgan, co-Founder of AFROPUNK said “The term ‘race music’ or ‘race records’ was originally coined by Okeh Records executive, Ralph Peer in the late 1920s/early ‘30s. It was meant to segregate the then-new-but-exploding recorded music market. Race music was any music thought to be consumed mostly by black audiences, be it blues, jazz, ragtime, or gospel. as is often our habit, we at

AFROPUNK approach this thought, conceived to separate people, as a call-to-arms that brings us together. We are very excited to once again partner with the Apollo Theater on this series that celebrates the ‘race’ artists who were out front in the fight for civil rights and leading cultural conversations then and now.”

Information

For more information please visit <https://www.apollotheater.org/event/kamasi-washington/>

Race Music Weekend **Films**

Thursday, February 21 at 6:30 p.m.

Live Wire: Mr. Soul!

Free! Visit www.ApolloTheater.org to RSVP

Race Music weekend will kick off with a free screening of *Mr. SOUL!* presented by the Apollo Theater’s Education Program as part of its Live Wire series in collaboration with Firelight Media.

From 1968 to 1973, the public-television variety show *SOUL!*, guided by the enigmatic producer and host Ellis Haizlip, offered an unfiltered, uncompromising celebration of black literature, poetry, music, and politics—voices that had few other options for national exposure, and, as a result, found the program an improbable place to call home. The groundbreaking PBS series was among the first to provide expanded images of African Americans on television, shifting the gaze from inner-city poverty and violence to the vibrancy of the Black Arts Movement. With participants’ recollections and a bevy of great archival clips, *Mr. SOUL!* captures a critical moment in culture whose impact continues to resonate.

Visit <http://www.firelightmedia.tv/films-by-firelight/> to learn more about Firelight Media.

Saturday, February 23 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Race Music Films Curated by ImageNation Cinema Foundation

Free! Visit www.ApolloTheater.org to RSVP

Join us for an afternoon of films and panel discussions curated by ImageNation Cinema Foundation, an innovative Harlem-based non-profit created to develop cinemas and audiences for independent films and music, that depict the global Black experience. Please visit www.apollotheater.org for updates.

About AFROPUNK

AFROPUNK is an integrated media platform and global live events company that serves as a voice for the unwritten, unwelcome and unheard. It is the largest platform for discovery of alternative Black culture and continues to be recognized as the most multicultural festival in the US. AFROPUNK creates an anchor for its growing audience of multicultural youth through its annual music festivals, which span three continents and five cities around the globe (Brooklyn, Paris, London, Atlanta, and Johannesburg), while continually enhancing engagement and promoting conversation through content, commerce, and community.

About Kamasi Washington

Kamasi Washington is a multi-instrumentalist and producer born and raised in Leimert Park, Los Angeles. Forming his first band, the Young Jazz Giants, with Stephen “Thundercat” Bruner, Ronald Bruner, Jr. and Cameron Graves in high school, Washington went on to study ethnomusicology at UCLA and play with Snoop Dogg, Raphael Saadiq and more. His debut album, *The Epic*, was released in 2015 to rapturous critical reception, embraced as one of the best of the year and awarded the inaugural American Music Prize. *Heaven and Earth* follows *The Epic* as well as Washington’s 2017 EP *Harmony of Difference*, an exploration of the musical concept of counterpoint that debuted as an original work for the 2017 Whitney Museum of Art Biennial.

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 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 <https://www.apollotheater.org/>.

About ImageNation

Led by Moikgantsi Kgama, ImageNation has hosted film screenings, live music performances and other cultural events for more than 150,000 people worldwide since its inception in New York City in 1997. Programs have featured appearances by leading filmmakers such as Spike Lee, Lee Daniels, Stanley Nelson and more. ImageNation is a founding partner in AFFRM, a national film distribution collective, founded by Ava DuVernay. ImageNation’s RAW SPACE, will be developed into the ImageNation Cinema Cafe, a boutique cinema highlighting global Black film and culture. For more info please visit www.imagenation.us.

About Films by Firelight Media

Films by Firelight was created by Firelight Media to introduce our Harlem community to a diverse range of documentary films that have been directed and produced by the talented filmmakers we work with as part of our flagship program, the Documentary Lab, as well as to some of the work of its founder Stanley Nelson.

Support

The Apollo's season is made possible by leadership support from Coca-Cola, Citi, Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, BNY Mellon, and the Jerome L. Greene Foundation.

Public support for the Apollo Theater is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

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For more information, please contact: press@apollotheater.org