



Newark Symphony Hall

Newark Symphony Hall to Co-Present Def Poetry Jam Online Special on May 23rd Mayor Ras J. Baraka to be Featured in Streaming Event Organized To Raise Money for Newark, NJ COVID-19 Relief

(May 18, 2020) Def Poetry Jam returns for a mega marathon of Healing, Power & Poetry with a very special live-streamed event benefiting COVID-19 relief on Saturday, May 23, 2020 at 7pm ET/4 PM PT. The program will stream online on Twitch at www.twitch.tv/defpoetryjam and Facebook Watch at www.facebook.com/russellsimmons. The online show will also be simulcast on Newark, NJ's municipal access channel NWK 78.

This epic evening of artistry will be hosted by The Legendary Black Ice and Jessica Care Moore with special guest poet Ras Baraka, Mayor of Newark, NJ. More than two dozen poets have been confirmed to perform, including Def Poetry all-stars such as Georgia Me, Staceyann Chin, Roger Bonair, Bassey Ikpi, and Sunni Patterson. The production will introduce powerful new voices like Brandon “Real Talk” Alexander, Elisabet Velasquez, and Khemist and feature legendary poetry voices like Abiodun Oyewole of The Last Poets. Actor and Def Poetry veteran Malcolm-Jamal Warner will make a special appearance and the show will also have a performance by Def Poetry Jam co-creator Danny Simmons, accompanied by jazz legend Ron Carter.

“The goal of our Def Poetry Jam streaming event is to raise funds to provide basic needs for members of Newark, NJ's vulnerable and underserved community,” said Danny Simmons, chairman of Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation (Rush Arts). “All funds from the fundraiser will be collected by Rush Arts and administered by Newark Symphony Hall's #EmbraceNewark initiative, with 25% going to artists in need.”

Russell Simmon's Def Poetry Jam opened on Broadway in November 2002. A television version of the show ran on HBO from 2002 to 2007. The TV series featured performances by established and up-and-coming poets as well as famous actors and musicians, and was key in advancing the cultural importance of poetry. The Broadway show won a Tony Award and the television series won a Peabody Award.

The May 23rd fundraiser is produced and curated by Lamar “The Legendary Black Ice” Manson and Jessica Care Moore and presented online by GC Studios, a division of Gushcloud International, in association with Newark Symphony Hall. Newark Symphony Hall President and CEO Taneshia Nash Laird is an executive producer of the event. Laird is also president of the board of Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation.

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ABOUT RUSH PHILANTHROPIC ARTS FOUNDATION (www.RushPhilanthropic.org)

Co-founded by Danny Simmons in 1995, Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation (Rush Arts) is dedicated to providing underserved youth with contemporary art education, and developing and supporting emerging artists and curators while cultivating new audiences.

ABOUT NEWARK SYMPHONY HALL (www.newarksymphonyhall.org)

First opened in 1925 as the Salaam Temple built by the Shriners, an order of the Masons, Newark Symphony Hall has been the home of almost a century of arts and culture in what is now New Jersey's oldest arts and entertainment venue. #EmbraceNewark is Newark Symphony Hall's artist-activated initiative facilitating resources for food distribution, personal protective equipment, and wellness checks while producing online artistic programming designed to engage and inform.

ABOUT GUSHCLOUD INTERNATIONAL (www.gushcloud.com)

Gushcloud International is a global talent agency group, focused on marketing and entertainment. The company connects audiences and brands to influencers and content creators through representation and management, brand strategy, marketing and activation services, media production, sales and distribution, licensing and co-creating significant IP in the content, media and event spaces. The holding company has three business units: Gushcloud Marketing Group, Gushcloud Talent Agency, and Gushcloud Entertainment Group and has more than 300 employees in ten offices globally including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Korea, Japan, China, and the United States of America.

Editors Note:

A photo of Mayor Baraka is available at <https://bit.ly/defpoetrynewark>

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