



For Immediate Release

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ATLANTA JAZZ FESTIVAL PRESENTS THE APOLLO'S PRODUCTION OF *THE BLUES AND ITS PEOPLE* FEATURING RUSSELL GUNN AND THE ROYAL KRUNK JAZZ ORKESTRA WITH SPECIAL GUESTS AT ATLANTA SYMPHONY HALL ON MAY 26

ATLANTA – The Apollo Theater's production of *The Blues and Its People* celebrates the 60th Anniversary of Blues People: Negro Music in White America by Amiri Baraka. The concert sold out in New York and now it's coming to Atlanta. It features Blues, Jazz, and Gospel music performed by Russell Gunn and the 26-piece Royal Krunk Jazz Orkestra with special guests including Warren Wolf, Jazzmeia Horn, Miles Griffith, Leon Timbo, Weedie Braimah, and jessica Care moore. The Atlanta Jazz Festival will present the concert at Atlanta Symphony Hall on Friday, May 26, 2023 at 8:00 PM. Tickets become available to the general public on Friday, March 24 at noon at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).

Commissioned by The Apollo Theater, *The Blues and Its People* was Developed by Leatrice Ellzy, with Music Composed and Directed by Russell Gunn, Narration by Amber Iman, Projection Design by Xavier Taylor, and Lighting Design by CJ Pierce. To read a story about the production in the New York Times click [HERE](#).

"I saw the concert at The Apollo, and it was a profound and uplifting experience," states Camille Russell Love, Executive Director of the City of Atlanta - Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs. "It's the perfect way to kick off the Atlanta Jazz Festival weekend."

Poet, novelist, teacher, and political activist **Amiri Baraka** was born Everett LeRoi Jones in 1934 in Newark, New Jersey. He attended Rutgers University and Howard University, spent three years in the U.S. Air Force, and returned to New York City to attend Columbia University and the New School for Social Research. Baraka was well known for social criticism. Throughout much of his career his poetry, drama, fiction, and essays were confrontational, calculated to shock and awaken audiences to the political concerns of Black Americans.

Baraka was also a noted writer of music criticism. His classic history *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (1963) traces Black music from slavery to contemporary jazz. "Where the music goes that's where the people go. The music reflects the people," Amiri Baraka.

Russell Gunn Artist Statement. The thing that fascinates and inspires me most about our people is not only that we possess the ability to survive the seemingly unsurvivable; but to survive, adapt, and create things of unparalleled beauty which can only be explained through our innate sensibilities. From our ability to creatively prepare food that was deemed unworthy and taking discarded and broken musical instruments and making them the architectural tools of Black American Music. Although separated from the root of Africa, our sensibility could not be separated. The seasoning of

the food by our cooks, the harmonic and rhythmic tendencies of our musicians, the way we respond and move automatically to certain rhythms and tempos. Our connection to the most important way of communication besides the human voice, The Drum.

There is no separation of ***The Blues and Its People***. The beauty of our people is in that traveling drum, that braid and loc in our hair, that food in our pot, that Second line, that Shuffle, that Go-Go, that Swing, that Funk, that Boom Bap, that Jelly Roll Morton, that Louis Armstrong, those Nicholas Brothers, that Josephine Baker, that Katherine Dunham, that Sammy Davis Jr., that James Brown, that Howlin' Wolf, that Muddy Waters, that Mahalia Jackson, that Aretha Franklin, that Michael Jackson, that Duke Ellington, that Charlie Parker, that Miles Davis, that John Coltrane, that Woody Shaw, that Ornette Coleman, that Kenny Garrett, that Royal Krunk Jazz Orchestra! All part of the continuum, not to be separated.

Social Media: Stay connected, get the latest festival news, and join the conversation on Facebook: [AtlantaJazzFestival](#); Twitter: [AtlantaJazzFest](#) and Instagram: [Atlanta Jazz Festival](#).

46th Annual Atlanta Jazz Festival

The 46th Annual Atlanta Jazz Festival is presented by the City of Atlanta - Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs. The mission of the Atlanta Jazz Festival is to educate and entertain a diverse audience of jazz fans and to nurture the next generation of jazz musicians. The festival is funded through corporate sponsorships and by Atlanta Jazz Festival Inc, a 501(c)(3) cultural, non-profit organization. For more information about this year's festival visit the website at atljazzfest.com.

About Atlanta Symphony Hall LIVE

Atlanta Symphony Hall LIVE concerts feature world-renowned musicians and entertainers, several of which will be joined on-stage by the GRAMMY® award-winning, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Highlighting genres across the entertainment gamut, guests can enjoy concerts and events ranging from pop, rock, country, R&B, jazz, comedy, podcasts, book tours and everything in between. Symphony Hall continues to present a diverse array of artists throughout the year, bringing unique visual and auidial experiences to the Atlanta community through the magic of live performances.

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