

# Brooklyn Daily Eagle

## All-Brooklyn Night At the Apollo Theater

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HARLEM — On Wednesday, Feb. 9, the Apollo Theater will do something it has never done before — hold a Brooklyn-specific night of performances with “Amateur Night at the Apollo: Brooklyn Night.”

The event is held in conjunction with the Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC) as part of Black Brooklyn Renaissance, a yearlong programming initiative that began last February and was spearheaded by BAC Folk Arts Director Dr. Kay Turner. It’s designed to take a holistic look at black culture in Brooklyn over the past five decades.

Auditions for Amateur Night at the Apollo: Brooklyn Night were held at the beginning of October at the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation and were judged by Marion Caffey, executive producer and consultant of Apollo Amateur Night, who has been with the theater for two years.

“This is one of our biggest coups for Black Brooklyn Renaissance,” said Turner in September. “This is our night to shine in Harlem.”

Six adult contestants and three “Child Star of Tomorrow” contestants — children ages 5 through 15 — were chosen at the audition (the list is below), and their performances on Feb. 9 will be judged by the audience’s hooting and hollering. A three-person panel judges the decibel level of the audience, because sometimes it can get so exciting that it’s too close to call.

“People love having the power of the ‘boo’... There’s such a diverse audience; people come from France, Germany, Japan, Thailand, Brooklyn, New Jersey,” said Caffey in a previous interview.

“It’s a fun, fun night.”

Audience favorites picked during the Brooklyn night move on to the next round and compete against artists picked from other Amateur Nights throughout the season. At the end of the season, the first-place winner will win a cash prize of \$10,000, said Caffey. Two runners up also receive prizes. The winner of the “Child Star of Tomorrow” segment will receive a \$2,000 cash prize.

Special guest, Brooklyn-born Talib Kweli, will be at the event to perform some of his biggest hits. BAC will hold a benefit prior to Amateur Night, the proceeds of which will go to support programming in 2011.

### **Child Star of Tomorrow Contestants**

Ezell Frazier, vocalist (age 11) — Ezell, from Bedford Stuyvesant, has been singing since he was two years old and has performed in several musicals.

Chantel Welch, vocalist (age 11) — Chantel began singing at a young age and enjoys performing for family and friends at gatherings. You can find her on YouTube.

Brooklyn Virtuoso, violin group (ages 8 and 9) — Brooklyn Virtuoso is a group of young violinists that have been playing together since kindergarten under the direction of instructor Lucy Joy.

### **Adult Contestants**

Final Outlaw (James Johnson), rapper — a hip-hop artist with a significant local following. He has also toured the West Coast twice since 2008 and had a music video on rotation on MTV Europe and NYCTV last year.

Andres Quintero, vocalist — Born in Caracas, Venezuela, he began singing and performing as a teenager and studied musical theater at American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City. He has also toured the country working professionally in theater.

Calvin Booker, tap dancer — He was a member of The Young Hoofers and Creative Outlet with the Dance Theater of Brooklyn. Calvin appeared on Showtime at the Apollo with the Young Hoofers.

Donel Davis, vocalist — A singer, songwriter, actress and pianist hailing from Jamaica. She has performed at venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Lincoln University Concert Choir and the University Gospel Choir. She has also played Dorothy Dandridge in the play “Sonny’s Place.”

Curwen Mitchell, vocalist — A professional vocalist who has collaborated with well-known underground hip-hop artist Afu Ra as well as Broadway legend Desiree Coleman.

Rosa Hill, vocalist — A business management major with a minor in vocal music at Long Island University, Brooklyn. She began singing at five years old and participated in choir groups throughout her middle and high school years.