

Dave Chappelle's Unreleased Film 'Dave Chappelle Live in Real Life' to Screen at MVAAFF

Special Screening Benefits Duke Ellington School of the Arts Theatre Department Endowment and Cinematic Arts Program

OAKS BLUFF, MA, DC, UNITED STATES, July 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival (MVAAFF) announced today that it will present a special screening of Dave Chappelle's unreleased independent documentary "Dave Chappelle Live in Real Life" on Friday, August 8, at 2:30 PM at the Performing Arts Center (PAC), Martha's Vineyard. This exclusive screening, part of MVAAFF's 23rd annual festival, serves as a fundraising event to [benefit](#) Chappelle's alma mater, [Duke Ellington School of the Arts](#) in Washington, D.C.

Donors have early access to screening tickets and more! Visit www.mvaaff.com to support the Duke Ellington School of the Arts and to secure your seat. A limited number of individual tickets go on sale on August 6th on the MVAAFF website.

The documentary captures Chappelle's innovative pandemic-era comedy series that began in summer 2020 in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Fueled by the murder of George Floyd, shut-in by the closures of businesses due to the pandemic, and unable to perform around the country, the independent film, "Dave Chappelle Live In Real Life" follows Chappelle as he



Dave Chappelle Live In Real Life Poster



Dave Chappelle in Yellow Springs, Ohio, 2020 (Photo credit: Matthieu Bitton)

provides the community he calls home with two things desperately needed in difficult times—economic and comic relief. What began as an experimental socially distanced live comedy show in a neighbor's cornfield grew into an unforgettable summer with his neighbors, friends, and fellow comedians. Ultimately, Chappelle's cornfield concerts would serve as a model of courage not just for his community but for the entire live entertainment industry.

Proceeds from the screening will support the establishment of the Theatre Department endowment named in honor of the late Donal Leace, founding faculty member and former chair of the Drama Department at Duke Ellington School of the Arts. Additional funds will support equipment upgrades and enhanced programming for the school's Cinematic Arts & Media Production (CAMP) Department, formerly the Literary Arts Department.

Actor, author, and educator Dr. Lamman Rucker, another noted Ellington alumnus, will be in attendance. Both graduates have maintained strong connections to their alma mater and regularly support the school's fundraising efforts, with Chappelle famously stating that 'The Ellington School saved my life.'



Dave Chappelle sits on the big green Adirondack chair on the front lawn of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts during a 2017 visit to his alma mater in Washington, D.C. Photo credit: Mathieu Bitton.

Can't Join Us On the Island?

As Duke Ellington School of the Arts celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, we invite you to help secure the next 50 years of artistic excellence. Every contribution writes another chapter in the Duke Ellington legacy. Email development@ellingtonarts.org for more information. The annual festival schedule features additional screenings, panels, and surprises, all happening at Martha's Vineyard Performing Arts Center (MVPAC) and the Vineyard Lounge (VL), 100 Edgartown Road, Oak Bluffs, MA 02557. For the full schedule and more information, visit www.mvaaff.com.

ABOUT DAVE CHAPPELLE

Dave Chappelle is an award-winning American comedian, actor, screenwriter, and producer widely recognized as one of the most influential entertainers of his generation. He is the 2019 recipient of the Kennedy Center's Mark Twain Prize for American Humor and the 2025 NAACP President's Award. Chappelle's work in television and film includes his groundbreaking sketch comedy series "Chappelle's Show," which became the best-selling TV show in DVD history, multiple Netflix comedy specials, and memorable guest appearances on "Saturday Night Live."

He has earned five Emmy Awards, including three for his Netflix specials and two for hosting "Saturday Night Live" (2017, 2021), where his most recent 17-minute monologue stands as the longest in the show's 50-year history. Chappelle has won six Grammy Awards for Best Comedy Album, including his most recent for "The Dreamer" (2025).

ABOUT DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

The Duke Ellington School of the Arts (DESA) in Washington, DC, is a public arts high school that has nurtured creative talent for decades. Established in 1974, DESA was and remains the sole D.C. public high school to offer a dual curriculum encompassing professional arts training and academic enrichment in preparation for college and careers in the arts. Founded by D.C. philanthropist and avid art collector Peggy Cooper Cafritz and the late dancer and choreographer Mike Malone, DESA was named in honor of the legendary Duke Ellington to house the creative soul of the District and to reflect the rich cultural diversity of the United States. DESA's mission is to nurture and inspire passion for arts and learning in talented students who might not otherwise have an opportunity to develop their artistic skills, and to prepare them to become productive citizens in our global society through a strong focus on community service. For more info: <https://www.ellingtonschool.org>.

ABOUT THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD AFRICAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL

Founded in 2002, MVAAFF is an OSCAR®-qualifying festival in the short film category. Over nine days, MVAAFF provides a stage for independent and established African American filmmakers to screen, promote, and celebrate feature films, documentaries, and shorts from around the world. Founded by Floyd and Stephanie Rance, the festival creates a supportive environment for filmmakers and gives sponsors access to a sophisticated community of people of color.

ABOUT RUN&SHOOT FILMWORKS

Run&Shoot Filmworks, the team behind MVAAFF and the Color of Conversation Film Festival (COCFF), is known for producing standout visual content for clients like HBO, Martell Cognac, Reebok, NBC Sports, Hallmark Channel, and Foot Locker. For over 20 years, Run&Shoot has championed spaces where filmmakers can share ideas and stories.

Sonya Ede Williams

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