COMEDY ICON DAVE CHAPPELLE HOSTS FUNDRAISER FOR DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS SEPT. 25 AT DAR CONSTITUTION HALL

DESA's 50th Anniversary Celebration Continues As Proceeds Benefit the Donal Leace Endowment Fund and other programs.



DESA 50th Logo

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, September 23, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Comedy icon and Duke Ellington School of the Arts alumnus Dave Chappelle announced today he will return to Washington, D.C., to perform a benefit for his alma mater on Friday, September 25, 2026, at historic DAR Constitution Hall. The benefit follows a successful series of Duke Ellington School of the Arts fundraising events on Martha's Vineyard in August featuring Chappelle and fellow alumnus Lamman Rucker and friend of DESA, DJ D-Nice. The events were supported by the title sponsor Resorts World New York City.

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>
> *Sandi Logan, principal of Duke Ellington School of the Arts*

The event continues the celebration of Duke Ellington School of the Arts' (DESA) 50 years of artistic excellence while raising critical support for The Donal Leace Endowment for the Theater Department—the program Chappelle trained in as a student. The endowment is named for the late Donal Leace, who chaired Ellington's Theater Department, taught theater history, public speaking and the Harlem Renaissance, and mentored students including Chappelle and opera singer Denyce Graves. It supports theater instruction, productions, and performance opportunities for the next generation of creative artists.

FUNDRAISER: Duke Ellington School of the Arts Event Information: https://www.pledge.to/duke-ellington-school-of-the-arts-w-alumni-dave-chappelle

TICKETS: General Onsale Tickets @ www.LiveNation.com

More than a fundraiser, the benefit celebrates the transformative power of arts education and the enduring cultural impact of one of the nation's premier public arts high schools. Proceeds will support efforts to build the Duke Ellington School of the Arts permanent endowment, creating a sustainable source of funding to help ensure talented young artists have access to exceptional arts education, training, and opportunity for generations to come.




Dave Chappelle with Ellington Students

"Ellington has spent five decades proving that when young artists are given access, mentorship, and opportunity, they can change the world," said Sandi Logan, principal of Duke Ellington School of the Arts. "This event celebrates an incredible legacy while investing in the students whose creativity will shape our culture. We are building on the first 50 years to ensure the Ellington legacy continues for the next 50 and beyond," said Logan.

Its distinguished alumni include Dave Chappelle, Lamman Rucker, Ari Lennox, Corey Hawkins, Samira Wiley, Clifton Powell, Denyce Graves, Meshell Ndegeocello, Johnny Gill, Maimouna Youssef and Ben Williams, among many others whose work has made an impact across comedy, film, television, theater, music, dance, and the arts.

Supporters who are unable to attend can still participate in DESA's anniversary campaign. Every contribution helps provide the arts education, mentorship, wellness resources, technology, and professional opportunities that prepare Ellington students to become the next generation of creative leaders.

Bridge to Bold International joins The Ellington Fund in support of the school, helping raise critical funds for the permanent endowment. The collaboration advances Bridge to Bold's mission of expanding access to theater instruction and arts education.

SPONSORSHIP & CONTRIBUTIONS
For sponsorship opportunities, event information, or to make a contribution, contact Veronica Martin at Benefits@ellingtonarts.org

For access to events and benefits: Ellington Fundraiser Pledge Opportunities

These events are phone-free experiences. Pilot Boy Productions, Inc. and/or Dave Chappelle own all rights in the content and materials, including any jokes and sketches (the “Materials”), delivered during his performance.

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-on-DVD release of its era, 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," where his 2025 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
Founded in 1974, Duke Ellington School of the Arts (DESA) is Washington, D.C.'s premier public arts high school and the only D.C. public school to provide a dual curriculum of rigorous college-preparatory academics and professional arts training. Established by philanthropist Peggy Cooper Cafritz and choreographer Mike Malone, DESA has launched generations of award-winning artists, performers, filmmakers, musicians, writers, and creative leaders. The school's mission is to nurture artistic excellence while preparing talented young people to become leaders in the arts and engaged citizens in a global society. Its distinguished alumni include Dave Chappelle, Lamman Rucker, Ari Lennox, Corey Hawkins, Samira Wiley, Clifton Powell, Denyce Graves, Meshell Ndegeocello, Johnny Gill, Maimouna Youssef and Ben Williams, among many others whose work has made an impact across comedy, film, television, theater, music, dance, and the arts. As it celebrates its 50th anniversary, DESA continues to transform lives through access to exceptional arts education. The Ellington Fund is the nonprofit fundraising arm of Duke Ellington School of the Arts. www.ellingtonarts.org

ABOUT THE ELLINGTON FUND
The Ellington Fund is the nonprofit fundraising arm of Duke Ellington School of the Arts. District

of Columbia public funding covers Ellington's academics but not its pre-professional arts training. Through private philanthropy, the Ellington Fund underwrites the arts instruction, master classes, productions, scholarships, wellness programming, and creative resources that make an Ellington arts education possible.

Links
Dave Chappelle Goes Back To Ellington Video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZmWPsMsCG8
Download Hi Res Artwork:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18dcBusGREU7HNFZIW3qup6hWo6GNO-kx
Full Press Release: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kSGcTjbCyvTRIbCvggwC2BUijkuAcg7A/view
Event Details / Sponsorship: https://www.pledge.to/duke-ellington-school-of-the-arts-w-alumni-dave-chappelle
Live Nation/ Tickets: https://www.ticketmaster.com/event/1500652DF8E6B7A9
Resorts World NYC: https://rwnewyork.com
Bridge to Bold International -For information, contact Vida@bridgetobold.org or visit bridgetobold.org

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