Chaka Khan Walks the Runway, Karl Kani Makes His NYFW Return & October London Delivers Surprise Performance at EMERGE!

EMERGE! Fashion Show celebrated its 15th anniversary during New York Fashion Week with an evening of runway presentations, iconic honorees and performances

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, September 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Fashion, music and culture collided as EMERGE! Fashion Show celebrated its milestone 15th anniversary on Tuesday, September 15, 2026, closing out its New York Fashion Week festivities with an unforgettable evening of runway presentations, iconic honorees and surprise performances at Leman Ballroom in New York City.

> Fifteen years ago, I created EMERGE! because I believed talented designers deserved a platform where their creativity could be seen and celebrated”
>
> *Dionne Williams, Creator of Emerge!*

Presented by ORS Haircare, the anniversary celebration welcomed invited guests and featured six designers, more than 100 runway models and a dynamic lineup of fashion and entertainment personalities, continuing EMERGE!'s longstanding mission of creating visibility and opportunity for emerging designers while honoring the cultural icons who have shaped the industry.

Chaka Khan, Eva Marcille and Danessa Myricks Take Center Stage:
The evening's biggest moment belonged to legendary singer and global icon Chaka Khan, who received EMERGE!'s coveted 2026 Fashion Innovator Award. The 11-time GRAMMY Award winner brought the audience to its feet before commanding the catwalk, delivering one of the evening's most memorable moments.

Actress, model and television personality Eva Marcille was recognized with the Style Award, celebrating her influence across fashion, beauty and entertainment. Beauty entrepreneur and visionary Danessa Myricks, founder of Danessa Myricks Beauty, received the Business of Beauty Award, recognizing her contributions to the beauty industry and her commitment to empowering creatives and entrepreneurs.

Karl Kani Returns to the Runway; October London Surprises the Audience:

Hip-hop streetwear pioneer Karl Kani made his highly anticipated return to the EMERGE! runway for the first time in nearly a decade, unveiling his newest collection before an enthusiastic NYFW audience. The presentation celebrated Kani's enduring influence on streetwear and the intersection of fashion, music and hip-hop culture.


Chaka Khan receives Fashion Innovator Award

In another standout moment, GRAMMY-nominated R&B singer October London surprised guests when he left his front-row seat and took the stage for an impromptu performance of his hit song Back to Your Place, following the runway debut of the Saint London x FEDÚ Collection, his fashion collaboration with designer Ilbert J. Sanchez.

The anniversary runway also showcased emerging designers Matthew Joseph, Sonia Yaba of Paris-based LOU AYMÉ, and aakofii, each presenting distinctive collections that demonstrated the creativity, craftsmanship and fresh perspectives driving fashion forward.

ORS Haircare Brings Runway Beauty to Life as Presenting Sponsor:
As Presenting Sponsor, ORS Haircare played an integral role in bringing the runway's beauty vision to life. The brand's diverse haircare collections were used by EMERGE! backstage beauty team to create, style and maintain looks for more than 100 runway models, demonstrating the versatility of ORS products across an array of hair textures, styles and creative runway presentations.

The backstage hair and makeup experience was supported by Bennett Career Institute, which provided the glam team of hair and makeup professionals responsible for preparing the models for the runway.

Additional sponsors included Black Girl Vitamins, supporting the intersection of wellness and beauty, and skincare brands AMBI, Dermablend and AcneFree, which participated in the event's VIP gifting experience. During the runway celebration, Disaronno joined EMERGE! founder Dionne Williams in leading a special anniversary toast honoring the designers, honorees and supporters who have contributed to the platform's 15-year journey.

Fifteen Years of Creating Opportunity and Celebrating Excellence:
Founded in 2011 by public relations executive and cultural curator Dionne Williams, EMERGE!

Fashion Show has evolved from an intimate runway presentation into an established New York Fashion Week platform dedicated to elevating emerging designers while celebrating fashion's influential trailblazers.

Over the years, EMERGE! has recognized industry icons including André Leon Talley, Dapper Dan, Pat Cleveland, Beverly Johnson, Bethann Hardison, Law Roach, Sergio Hudson, Fern Mallis and many others.

"Fifteen years ago, I created EMERGE! because I believed talented designers deserved a platform where their creativity could be seen and celebrated alongside some of the industry's most influential names," said Dionne Williams, Founder and Executive Producer of EMERGE! Fashion Show.

The celebration was hosted by television personalities Raval Davis and Nick Arrington, with fashion entrepreneur and media personality Claire Sulmers serving as red carpet host.

For more information and highlights from the anniversary celebration, visit www.emergerunwaynyc.com or follow @emergenyfw on Instagram.

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