

# Audrey's society whirl



Audrey J. Bernard

## Harlem School of the Arts celebrates return to in-person gala. Tamron Hall and HSA's President James C. Horton to host HSA's 2023 gala

With unabashed love and pride, the storied Harlem School of the Arts (HSA) will host its first in-person gala since the Pandemic on Monday, May 1, 2023, from 6:30pm to 9:30pm at the plush Plaza Hotel, 59th Street and Fifth Avenue. HSA is uniquely positioned at the intersection of arts, education, and social justice and is dedicated to bringing equity of opportunity to every child regardless of their socioeconomic status, through the transformational power of the arts. This is all made possible through fundraising activities like the Spring Gala, and the generosity of donors, sponsors, and individuals who care and support arts programming for young people. The affair will kick off with red carpet arrivals and a cocktail reception, followed by dinner, an entertaining program highlighting incredible student performances, and ending with an amazing award ceremony. The stellar event will also mark the landmark organization's 59th year celebrating the cultural school's storied history.

During the stellar celebration, new changes and new beginnings will be highlighted as the organization's new president & CEO, James C. Horton takes on the role of co-hosting the event with two-time Emmy winning journalist, author, and producer Tam-



Host Tamron Hall



Host James C. Horton



Mary Schmidt Campbell



Natalie Cole (Getty Images)



Charles J. Hamilton Jr.



Phylicia Rashad

ron Hall, host of WABC-TV's Tamron Hall Show. Horton began his tenure on October 24, 2022, and has already established his unique style

of leadership, with a focus on community and uplifting HSA's founder Dorothy Maynor. Hall is best known for her nationally syndicated talk

show, Tamron Hall. She has an acclaimed mystery book series called Jordan Manning, and advocates for several causes, including domestic violence, homelessness, and literacy.

Notable recipients of the esteemed 2023 awards include actress, singer, director, and Dean of the Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts at Howard University, Phylicia Rashad; former President of Spelman College, Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell; The Legacy of Nat King Cole and Natalie Cole, with their cherished family, twin sisters Casey Cole-Ray and Timolin Cole-Augustus; HSA's Chairman of the Board, Charles J. Hamilton, Jr.; corporate leader, American Girl, LLC; and

philanthropic leader, MetLife Foundation.

This year's event will be the re-birth that the city has been undergoing since the lockdown. In 2021, HSA re-opened its doors to in-person arts training, in a facility that had undergone significant renovation, thanks to the Herb Alpert Foundation. Today, the organization is back to full capacity; the halls and instruction rooms alive with the sound of music, the shuffle of dancing feet; the interdisciplinary training of young people following their passion under the careful guidance of a small army of teaching artists and department chairs. For more on this year's Spring Gala, visit [www.hsanyc.org/gala23](http://www.hsanyc.org/gala23). For more information on the purchase of tickets and tables, visit [www.hsanyc.org/gala23](http://www.hsanyc.org/gala23).

## HSA and The Met welcomed composer Terence Blanchard

HSA in partnership with The Metropolitan Opera welcomed history making composer Terence Blanchard, who was the first Black composer to open a Met season in its entire 138 years. Joining him in the House that Ms. Maynor built, was acclaimed soprano, Latonia Moore and young Walter Russell III, who this year earned the distinction of becoming the youngest Black male to win a Grammy

for his role as Cha'res Baby in Blanchard's highly acclaimed Fire Shut Up in My Bones. Blanchard, who still pinches himself to make sure that being a part of the celebrated list of composers whose works have premiered at The Met, is real, held a Masterclass for students of the historic HSA. Among the incredibly special guests in attendance was New York City Schools Chancellor David C. Banks, along with friends of

the organization, families, and community residents. Moderating the event was Rae de Vine, Education Manager, Program Operations for The Met.

The evening began with a performance by members of the HSA Jazz Band and the NYC All-City High School Jazz Ensemble under the direction of Paul Corn, taking on the Blanchard composition "Mo'better Blues" from the Spike Lee film, followed by a

critique of their performance from Blanchard and a demonstration by the master trumpeter himself. The Dorothy Maynor Singers under the direction of Grant Anderson sang "Oh Boy" from Blanchard's new opera, Champion based on the life of boxer Emile Alfonse Griffith. The evening culminated with a performance of "Seven Babies" from Champion, by the magnificent soprano, and one of the stars of the opera, Latonia Moore. No

question, Ms. Maynor would have been delighted at this evening — one that will not soon be forgotten, thanks to the HSA's leadership, the partnership with The Met and the superb representation from the All-City High School Music Program. These initiatives are only possible when institutions like HSA can thrive thanks to the generosity of supporters and partners. (Photos courtesy of SMC Solutions and HSA)



Composer Terence Blanchard with The Met's Rae de Vine



(L-R) Reggie Pittman, Terence Blanchard, NYC School Chancellor David Banks, Opera star soprano Latonia Moore, HSA President James C. Horton, HSA Chief of Education Lee Hogans, Guest



Composer Terence Blanchard, Walter Russell III, Met soprano Latonia Moore