



THREE MEN, THREE MOVEMENTS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

theMann. FAIRMOUNT PARK | PHILADELPHIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEPT. 12: MANN & NEWorks PRODUCTIONS BRING COMMUNITY FORUM ON SOCIAL JUSTICE TO YOUTH ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Liberty: Unplugged! Town Hall Hosted by Actor/Activist Hill Harper

PHILADELPHIA (Aug. 14, 2015) – With its out-of-the-box approach to combining the arts with education, the Mann in partnership with NEWorks Productions will host a Town Hall on Sept. 12 encouraging youth in the Philadelphia region and around the country to share meaningful conversation and commentary about pressing social justice issues.

The event is the culmination of the Mann’s Liberty: Unplugged! 2015 festival, which was curated by NEWorks Productions’ Nolan Williams, Jr., to celebrate the messages and movements of three iconic men – Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela – and to do it in a way that facilitates real dialogue about difficult contemporary issues.



Hill Harper hosts Liberty: Unplugged! Town Hall Sept. 12.

If You Go:

Liberty: Unplugged! Town Hall

Date: Saturday, Sept. 12

Time: 1 – 4 p.m.

Place: Moore College of Art & Design

Tickets: Free. Register at www.manncenter.org

The Liberty: Unplugged! Town Hall will include three parts:

Liberty: Unplugged! Twitter Town Hall

The Liberty: Unplugged! Twitter Town Hall will connect student scholars, via the social platform as well as live streaming technology, in Philadelphia, Ferguson, Mo., Charleston, S.C., Baltimore, Md., and Buffalo, N.Y.

Moderated by actor and activist Hill Harper, the event is a forum for high school and college-aged scholars to freely engage in critical peer dialogue about three themes that, as in the days of Douglass, King, and Mandela, still threaten the cause of liberty nationally and globally: modern-day slavery (human trafficking, unfair wages), voting rights (including voter registration laws and voter suppression), and human rights.

The main stage for the discussion will be in Philadelphia with Harper and presentations by six student scholars from Temple University, the University of Pennsylvania, Cheyney University and West Chester University. A live web stream of the forum will engage satellite gatherings of student scholars in Charleston, Ferguson, Baltimore and Buffalo, each moderated by scholars and leaders in their respective communities. Dr. Stefan Bradley, historian and community activist, will host students scholars on the campus of St. Louis University; Dr. Mari Crabtree, historian, will host student scholars on the campus of the College of Charleston; Dr. Lisa Weah, pastor and community leader, will moderate a gathering of student scholars at the Morning Star Baptist Church—one of Baltimore’s premiere megachurches; and “Jazzy T” Williams, local radio and television personality, will convene student scholars at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.



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Poetry Slam

Hosted by Harper, the finalists of the Liberty: Unplugged! citywide poetry contest will compete live in a poetry slam, adjudicated by a blue-ribbon panel of Philadelphia community and business leaders. This contest, launched on July 5, 2015, the anniversary of Frederick Douglass' landmark speech, "What to the Negro is the Fourth of July?", is presented in partnership with the Philly Youth Poetry Movement. More than 20 area young people submitted their original work to the contest, and five will perform their works at the Town Hall in September. Winners will be awarded cash prizes and their performances featured on the Mann's digital platforms.

United We Band

Finally, the Town Hall will culminate with a musical showcase featuring emerging young Philadelphia artists performing songs of civil rights and social justice. These artists will span multiple musical genres, presenting both original songs and cover tunes of staples from the Civil Rights Movement. The concert is presented in partnership with Artists United, S Factor Entertainment and PhilAsh Entertainment Group.

"The Mann's tradition of combining arts and education in the community is core to our mission," said Catherine M. Cahill, president and CEO of the Mann. "We couldn't be more proud of this critical programming. By encouraging young people to explore the lessons of history, they can inform their voices for the future."

"Our aim with this project is to make the history of Douglass, King and Mandela intimately accessible to young people—unplugging, if you will, the formalized context of textbooks and classrooms—to empower them to reinterpret this history in a way that is relevant to them, given the events of our times," said Williams, who is CEO of NEWorks Productions and artistic director of Liberty: Unplugged!

Liberty: Unplugged! has been made possible through the generous support of the Louis N. Cassett Foundation, Syde Hurdus Foundation, Independence Blue Cross, Lomax Family Foundation and Merck.

About the Mann

As one of the most important outdoor music centers in the country, the Mann presents premiere artists in a world-class, entertainment destination in association with AEG Live. Each summer season, renowned symphony orchestras, iconic rock stars and the latest touring artists in indie rock, hip hop, R&B and pop take the stage here, and today's success is a nod to the venue's storied history. The Mann has been the summer home of The Philadelphia Orchestra since the 1930s and presented critically acclaimed performers in every decade since then. Located in the heart of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, the Mann hosts more than 170,000 visitors annually. Signature concert experiences are surrounded by Philadelphia's stunning skyline and include seats beneath the Mann's acoustically acclaimed pavilion; picnics, blankets and music under the stars on its famous lawn; and dining in Crescendo, the venue's spectacular tented restaurant. For more information, visit www.manncenter.org.

About NEWorks Productions

As one of the country's premiere producers of inspirational-arts programming, NEWorks Productions partners with leading humanitarian, educational, and arts institutions to present curatorial festivals, concert productions, special events, and other signature projects that leverage the power of music and the arts for community engagement and social good. Past and present partners include: the Mann Center for the Performing Arts, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Susan G. Komen, the American Cancer Society, the Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts, Georgetown University, Oberlin College, the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation, the Embassy of India, the Amalfi Coast Music and Arts Festival, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra.

About Liberty: Unplugged!



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Liberty: Unplugged! is a festival of community events and programming that grapples with the issues of freedom from slavery, voting rights, and human rights by focusing on the messages and movements of three men who have transformed our political and social landscape: Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela. The focus on these three iconic men coincides with the convergence of three anniversaries of note: the 150th anniversary of the 13th Amendment, the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, and the 25th anniversary of Nelson Mandela's release from Robben Island prison.

With Liberty: Unplugged!, the Mann is inviting audiences, artists, and scholars of all ages to "unplug" history from its traditional modes of instruction, creatively reinterpreting the still-timely themes of these men and their movements through a series of special concert events, community partnership initiatives, and educational programs.

Get engaged. Join the conversation. #libertyunplugged. www.manncenter.org/libertyunplugged

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