

Black Women in Comedy Laff Fest Returns to the NYC Stage June 16-20th

The annual New York City comedy festival returns to give a voice to and empower the Black women comedy community

New York, New York, June 16th, 2021 - Black Women in Comedy Laff Fest, an annual weekend long festival hosted in various locations across New York City, is back after its 2020 hiatus. Previously known as The Black Women in Comedy Festival, this year's event will be held June 16-20th and is focusing on three important themes: sisterhood, self care and social distancing. The final day of the festival will coincide with Juneteenth, making the day extra special for the community.

Founder Joanna Briley noticed a lack of diversity in the comedy industry and recognized the need to amplify the hidden yet ever-present comedic voices in the Black community by creating a platform for these diverse, powerful, yet often overlooked, voices to be heard. Briley has been a comedian and successful producer for over ten years and is excited to continue her legacy while creating a sisterhood with the Laff Fest.

The previous 2019 festival weekend took place during Black History month and the beginning of Women's History month, while this year's Laff Fest will be held during Pride month, featuring LGBTQ+ representative Black comedians and empowering Black women in the comedy community.

"When I first began my journey in the comedy industry, I was too shy and afraid to seek out a mentor, but in this business you fare better with a veteran comedian, male or female, to help guide you and shape your journey," said Joanna Briley, comedian and founder of Black Women in Comedy Laff Fest. "As Black comedians, the emotional and mental aspects of navigating an industry that isn't as inclusive as it may seem, can take a toll on your spirit. The goal of the festival is to create a safe space to share and unload the negative experiences most of us have faced, and leave the festival with a renewed passion for success."

The festival will take place at 13 venues: New York Comedy Club, Gotham Comedy Club, Caroline's on Broadway, The Stand, Stand Up NY, Brooklyn House of Comedy, Friends and Lovers, The Tiny Cupboard, Broadway Comedy Club, West Side Comedy Club, St. Marks Comedy Club, Bedford Manor and Tilly's BKLYN. The previous year's event was held across Brooklyn, but this year will see an expansion into Manhattan in addition.

The annual event is sponsored by Stand Up! Girls™, a NYC nonprofit teaching girls from underserved communities to write and perform stand-up comedy, and Lois Thompson, Comedian and Real Estate Broker and Certified Negotiation Specialist at Compass.com. Thompson hosts and produces the all-female Blacklight Comedy Show at Brooklyn Moon.

"The Black Women in Comedy Laff Fest was born out of rage at the fact Black women are continuously left out of the Comedy Conversation, yet we've always been a shiny, paramount thread in the fabric of America," said Hollie Harper, Stand Up! Girls board member. "In its second year, we continue to honor

the devastatingly hilarious Black women that keep comedy clubs and zooms laughing all over this country.”

Tickets for the shows cost \$15 and festival 2-4 day passes are available for purchase. Due to safety restrictions for Covid-19, sales are limited and only available online at this time.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit the www.bwiclafffest.com

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About Black Women in Comedy Laff Fest:

The Black Women In Comedy Festival was born out of rage after decades of the Black community being left out. The festival will take place over five days, finishing up with a Juneteenth celebration this summer in NYC. The festival will showcase some of the best, brightest and funniest Black women from all over the Diaspora. With an emphasis on all facets of comedy, the goal is to create opportunities for Black Women to be seen, heard and influential in changing the narrative while simultaneously empowering the “sisterhood” to look out for one another in a safe and nurturing environment where everyone gets to shine.