

2006 Essence Music Festival is Hip-Hop Driven

Written by Robert ID2569
Friday, 28 April 2006 03:54 -

Hip-hop and rap artists are among the acts added to this year's 2006 Essence Music Festival. From old school Maze Featuring Frankie Beverly and a New Edition and Bobby Brown Reunion, to hip-hop and rap heavy weights Doug E Fresh and Slick Rick this years Essence Music Festival is attracting a lot of attention.

The queen of hip-hop soul Mary J. Blige will also be present to lend her beauty and talent to the event.

Brand New Heavies, Doug E. Fresh and Slick Rick, Goapele, Kindred, Loose Ends and Musiq, as well as local New Orleans and Houston artists Captain Charles, C.O.C.O Brown & The Phat Cat Players, DJ Raj Smoove, Rebirth Brass Band, Myra Washington and Michael Ward, will perform in the Coca-Cola and Budweiser/Bud Light Lounges in Reliant Stadium. In addition, comedian Jonathan Slocumb will serve as the main stage host. This year's awe-inspiring celebration, set for July 1, 2, and 3 in Houston, Texas, will be a "bigger party with a deeper purpose."

The night-by-night schedule of performances is as follows:

SATURDAY, JULY 1	SUNDAY, JULY 2	MONDAY, JULY 3
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Main Stage	Main Stage	Main Stage
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Mary J. Blige	Diddy and Friends	Maze featuring Frankie Beverly
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Earth, Wind & Fire	New Edition	Toni Braxton
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Mo"Nique	Bobby Brown	Cedric the Entertainer
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LL Cool J Steve Harvey Charlie Wilson

Yolanda Adams Jaheim Keyshia Cole

Chris Brown

Main Stage Host,

Jonathan Slocumb

Lounges Lounges Lounges

Goapele Kindred Musiq

Doug E. Fresh and Brand New Heavies Loose Ends

Slick Rick Myra Washington Rebirth Brass Band

C.O.C.O Brown & DJ Raj Smoove Michael Ward

The Phat Cat Players

Captain Charles

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The Coca-Cola Presents the Essence Music Festival, known as "the party with a purpose," is the nation's largest annual African-American event and the largest gathering of musical talent in the world. The Festival has become a destination of choice for families and friends as they schedule their reunions. This multigenerational Festival offers free inspirational and interactive Empowerment Seminars during the day and exciting performances at night, where Festivalgoers can dance and sing along with the biggest names in entertainment -- R&B, classic soul, hip-hop, rap, neo-soul and jazz -- all on three stages within Reliant Stadium.

The theme for the Empowerment Seminars will be "ESSENCE Cares! A Call To Action To Secure Our Youth," and will feature Magic Johnson and Jamie Foxx.

"ESSENCE Cares! A Call To Action To Secure Our Youth" initiative is designed to help rescue vulnerable children and restore the lives of Hurricane Katrina survivors, while addressing critical issues facing Black America. From poverty and unemployment to the culture of violence, unequal educational systems and the ongoing affects of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina -- all represent a cry for help that can no longer be ignored. Magic Johnson and Jamie Foxx are joining forces with ESSENCE to challenge Festivalgoers to come, listen, learn and choose their method of support from reliable national organizations, including the NAACP and the National Urban League. Seminar attendees will also hear from other celebrities, activists, scholars, politicians, business and spiritual leaders who will work with the "ESSENCE Cares!" initiative, and make a commitment to take a united stand. The entire Empowerment Seminar schedule will be announced in a few weeks.

The Essence Marketplace will showcase artists from throughout the country who offer an array of quality arts and crafts that reflect Black culture. The marketplace will also include sponsor activities, celebrity meet-and-greets, Festival souvenirs and a book fair with author book signings.

The Festival will take place in its new interim home, state-of-the-art Reliant Park in Houston, Texas -- a city with a dynamic melting pot of cultures and a venue for world-class shopping, restaurants and nightlife.

Tickets are on sale at <http://www.ticketmaster.com>, (800) 488-5252 or (713) 629-3700 in Houston. Tickets are \$45, \$56, \$67, \$72, \$83, and \$110. All tickets are subject to additional

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service charges. For hotel accommodations, call (888) 508-5731. For more information, see the June 2006 issue of ESSENCE or log on to <http://www.essence.com>

The Coca-Cola Presents the 2006 Essence Music Festival is produced by Essence Festivals LLC in association with Festival Productions of New Orleans. Essence Festivals LLC is a division of Essence Communications Inc. (ECI). ECI is also the publisher of ESSENCE magazine. ESSENCE, after 36 years, continues to be the preeminent lifestyle magazine for African-American women.

Essence Festivals Web site: <http://www.essence.com/>