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Mama Foundation for the Arts

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Mama Foundation for the Arts Expands to Celebrate the Music: Mama Music Matters

Harlem, New York. – Mama Foundation for the Arts is expanding its Gospel for Teens (GFT) program to include all genres! Aptly renamed the Mama Music Matters program, the reimaging of Gospel for Teens will allow students to explore a variety of music all while gaining an appreciation for the influences of gospel, jazz, R&B, and more.

Founded in 2006 by Mama Foundation Executive Director and legendary radio personality Vy Higginsen, alongside her daughter and Mama Foundation Artistic Director, Ahmaya Knoelle, the GFT program has grown into an Emmy Award-winning teenage gospel program whose mission is to help students expand their self-confidence while exploring their artistic talents and expression through black musical genres.

Still a highly respected source of education and self-development for New York City youth, aspiring students will now have the opportunity to learn about the significance and influence of other genres.

“Our mission has been, and always will be, to help students discover their voices,” said Ahmaya Knoelle. “We are expanding our program to truly accommodate the different voices and styles that we come across in the classroom.”

Knoelle added that GFT will always centralize and amplify Black musical artforms like gospel, an essential to the American musical landscape, but that incorporating other genres is the next step in growth as the program helps its teens develop their talent.

“African American music has made a major contribution to American music. These genres are precious and need to be saved and persevered and celebrated,” Vy Higginsen expressed. “Gospel is at the root of African American culture, and we look forward to introducing more Black musical artforms that our students can learn and grow from. Not only do we aim to be a catalyst for positive transformation for our students, but we also keep our promise that they will be seen, and heard, through every genre we can offer.”

Registration for Mama’s Music Matters is now open, and the Mama Foundation welcomes students from all walks of life to join in on this new journey! New and returning students can enroll at mamafoundation.org/enroll or by calling 212-280-1045. The program serves 50-75 students each semester and is completely free to all students. Open house for auditions is September 10th and 17th.

Mama Foundation for the Arts is a non-profit organization whose mission is to make a joyful noise, to uplift the Black musical treasures of gospel, jazz, and R&B, and to heal and inspire through the power of collective music making. To learn more or support Mama Foundation for the Arts, visit mamafoundation.org

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