

Mary Helps Save Music in Harlem

Queen of Hip-Hop Mary J. Blige has put her money where her soul is and has helped save The Harlem School of the Arts

Despite **The Harlem School of the Arts'** (HSA) rich history of success in opening doors for its alumni to the best performance high schools and top-tier colleges and conservatories—such as Harvard and The Juilliard School—not to mention Broadway shows and feature films, for three weeks this past April, the school was forced to close its doors to students due to a lack of funding and a \$500,000 deficit. Thanks to the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs' special emergency fundraising campaign, \$1 million was raised through the donations of four foundations allowing HSA to remain open through its summer programs—but then what?—as all schoolchildren know, summer is fleeting.

HSA has long been a shining pillar in the community.

The school founded in 1964 by nationally acclaimed soprano Dorothy Maynor, now brightens the lives of more than 3,000 children and young adults from the Harlem/Upper Manhattan community each year through instruction in music, dance, theater, and the visual arts. HSA's ARTS in Education tuition-free program currently serves fifteen public schools in Harlem, the Upper West Side, Upper Manhattan, and the Bronx. The program's students are predominantly African-American and Latino and include students with special needs, including elementary through high-school-age students with autism.

When **Mary J. Blige**, nine-time Grammy winning artist, heard what was happening in Harlem, she stated she is "committing to help out in whatever way I can." An understatement if there ever was one: Blige's first "way" is organizing a fundraising concert featuring many of her big-name industry friends and peers—exactly the type of ongoing support that the school needs and that the children truly deserve.

THE
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