

Press Release

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FOR RELEASE:

November 15, 2023

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
will present
The 25th Mark Twain Prize for American Humor
to
KEVIN HART



Prize Will Be Awarded at the Kennedy Center
At a Gala Performance on March 24, 2024

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts will present the 25th Mark Twain Prize for American Humor to **Kevin Hart** on March 24, 2024 in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. The Prize, which is named to honor one of the world’s greatest humorists, will be awarded at a gala performance featuring some of the biggest names in comedy. *Broadcast and casting details to be announced at a later date.*

The Mark Twain Prize for American Humor, presented by Wells Fargo, recognizes individuals who have had an impact on American society in ways similar to the distinguished 19th-century novelist and essayist Samuel Clemens, colloquially known as Mark Twain. As a social commentator, satirist, and

creator of characters, Clemens was a fearless observer of society who delighted and informed onlookers with his uncompromising perspective on social injustice and personal folly.

“For over three decades, Kevin Hart has been a source of laughter across America and throughout the world with his iconic characters, inimitable physical comedy, and relatable narratives. An accomplished writer, producer, actor, and comedian, he has made lasting contributions to the comedic landscape and represents our celebration of American humor at the Kennedy Center,” said Kennedy Center President, Deborah F. Rutter. “We express our gratitude to Kevin for enriching American culture and look forward to celebrating his exceptional career.”

“I’ve been doing comedy since the inception of this award 25 years ago. To be honored in this commemorative year feels surreal. Comedy is my outlet for social commentary and observations on life—I am grateful to the Kennedy Center for recognizing my voice and impact on culture,” says Hart. “I can’t wait to celebrate!”

As a recipient of the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor, Hart will receive a copy of an 1884 bronze portrait bust of Mark Twain sculpted by Karl Gerhardt (1853–1940). Previous recipients of the Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize are Richard Pryor (1998), Jonathan Winters (1999), Carl Reiner (2000), Whoopi Goldberg (2001), Bob Newhart (2002), Lily Tomlin (2003), Lorne Michaels (2004), Steve Martin (2005), Neil Simon (2006), Billy Crystal (2007), George Carlin (2008), Bill Cosby (2009; rescinded in 2018), Tina Fey (2010), Will Ferrell (2011), Ellen DeGeneres (2012), Carol Burnett (2013), Jay Leno (2014), Eddie Murphy (2015), Bill Murray (2016), David Letterman (2017), Julia Louis-Dreyfus (2018), Dave Chappelle (2019), Jon Stewart (2022), and Adam Sandler (2023).

The event was created by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Bob Kaminsky, Peter Kaminsky, Mark Krantz, and John Schreiber. In celebration of its 25th anniversary, David M. Rubenstein is serving as the Honorary Chair, with Gala Co-Chairs Barbara Goodman Manilow and Cappy McGarr—a steadfast supporter of the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor since its inception in 1998.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is America’s living memorial to President Kennedy. It is the nation’s busiest performing arts facility and annually hosts more than 2,000 performances for audiences totaling nearly 2 million; Center-related touring productions and television and radio broadcasts welcome 40 million more. The Center presents performances of music, dance, and theater—balancing classical art forms with contemporary genres such as comedy, jazz, and hip hop—supports artists in the creation of new work, and serves the nation as a leader in arts education.

The 25th Mark Twain Prize will be produced by David Jammy and the creative team at Done+Dusted, the Kennedy Center’s producing partner for the Mark Twain Prize since 2018.

ABOUT KEVIN HART

Emmy® and Grammy®-nominated Kevin Hart was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where he launched his career as a comedian during an amateur night at a local comedy club. Over the years, Hart has become Hollywood’s box office powerhouse, opening 11 films at number one at the box office and grossing more than in \$4.23 billion global revenue.

Hart has also become a successful entrepreneur; he is chairman of Hartbeat, a global, multi-platform media company creating entertainment at the intersection of comedy and culture with a mission to “keep the world laughing together.” The company unites Hartbeat Productions’ best-in-class TV and

film production capabilities with Laugh Out Loud’s expansive distribution network, along with its marketing, sales, experiential, branded content, digital, and social capabilities. Hart is also the founder of HartBeat Ventures. Together, these companies play an integral role in building Hart’s ecosystem for extraordinary growth and creativity.

Hart continues to develop, star, and produce feature films, television, and podcasts via Hartbeat for his various partners, including Netflix, Peacock, Sirius XM, and Audible. Hart recently toured internationally with his eighth hour of stand-up material titled *The Reality Check* Tour. Hart filmed his hour in Las Vegas and, on July 6, exclusively released it as a comedy special for streaming on Peacock. The tour was named the number one Comedy Tour of 2022 by *Billboard*, and Hart was awarded the People’s Choice Award for Comedy Act of 2022 on behalf of the new hour. In 2020, Hart released his seventh hour-long stand-up special, *Zero F**ks Given*, which quickly became Netflix’s biggest stand-up special of 2020, earned him a Grammy® nomination for Best Comedy Album, as well as an Emmy® nomination. Hart also earned Emmy® nominations for *Die Hart* and the sequel *Die Hart 2: Die Harter*, both for Outstanding Actor in a Short Form Comedy or Drama Series. Hart is a *New York Times* bestselling author twice over and his first Audible original, *The Decision*, was nominated for an Audie Award for Best Original Audiobook in 2021.

Hart is a founding partner in three companies: the premium tequila brand, Gran Coramino, plant-based restaurant, Hart House, and the nutritional wellness brand, Vita Hustle. Hart’s brand partnerships include Sam’s Club, Audemars Piguet, Fabletics Men, Chase J.P Morgan, Draft Kings, Hydrow, NutraBolt, and Therabody.

FUNDING CREDIT

David M. Rubenstein is the Honorary Chair of the 2024 Mark Twain Prize. The Gala Co-Chairs are Barbara Goodman Manilow and Cappy McGarr. Wells Fargo is the Presenting Sponsor of the Mark Twain Prize.

TICKET INFORMATION

Sponsorship packages for the Mark Twain Prize gala performance, which start at \$1,300 and include a pre-performance reception, gala performance tickets, and a post-performance celebration, are on sale now and can be reserved online or through the Development Office by emailing mtp@kennedy-center.org. Funds raised through the event support the Kennedy Center’s mission to make the arts accessible to all, be a national leader in arts education, and honor President John F. Kennedy.

Information about limited sales of performance-only tickets will be made available at a later date.

Performance tickets will be available at the Kennedy Center Box Office, online at kennedy-center.org, and via phone through Instant Charge, (202) 467-4600; toll-free at (800) 444-1324. For all other ticket-related customer service inquires, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540.

For more information, please visit the [Mark Twain Prize webpage](#).

For more information about the Kennedy Center, please visit our [website](#).

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