

Mr. SOUL! Documentary Streaming Now On HBO Max

Mr. SOUL! is the 2018 documentary about Ellis Haizlip who was the executive producer and host of *SOUL!* the pioneering PBS series about Black life. Haizlip hosted Harry Belafonte, Sidney Poitier, Earth, Wind & Fire, Roberta Flack, Ashford & Simpson, Al Green and more from 1968 until its 1973 cancellation. The show has been called the first “Black Tonight Show” decades before Arsenio Hall mesmerized the late-night slot for Black America. Hall, actually appeared on *Mr. SOUL!* as a fifteen-year old magician. Haizlip spent his entire life producing Black cultural events. In 1971 and 1972 he produced *SOUL At The Center*, a two-week Black arts festival. It was the first time Lincoln Center collaborated with the Black community on a musical showcase.Â

Through the years Haizlip would contribute to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture as the Director of Special Programs. He served on several Boards of Directors including the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre Foundation. Those are but two of his achievements that continued to stack until his passing at the age of 60 in 1991. But it is hisÂ work on *SOUL!* that is the subject of the film. His niece, Melissa Haizlip is the director of *Mr. SOUL!* and she stated in a press release that she always wanted to make a movie about her uncle and his time hosting the weekly show on New York’s WNET Channel 13. Blair Underwood narrates Ellis Haizlip’s perspective and Robert Glasper has composed original music for the film. Check out the trailer below and watch *Mr. SOUL!* now on HBO Max.Â

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