



I Love This Job!

APOLLO THEATER EXEC

Nicole A. Bernard, 37

SALARY RANGE: \$175,000–\$250,000

Imagine walking the same stage that Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan and the Jackson 5 performed on, or working in an office that once served as the studio of the renowned artist Romare Bearden. As senior vice-president of business development at the world-famous Apollo Theater in Harlem, my day-to-day responsibilities include handling the intellectual property aspects of the Apollo and its brand development. That includes identifying and entering into partnerships that will further the Apollo brand and creating additional revenue sources for the Apollo via TV, film, music, merchandising, publishing and licensing.

"After graduating from Georgetown University Law Center, I decided to forgo the traditional route of practicing in a law firm. Instead I landed a job in business affairs at Uptown/MCA Records, where I worked with seasoned attorneys negotiating deals for performers like Mary J. Blige and Jodeci, and for the film *Strictly Business*. I moved on to negotiate on behalf of production companies, record labels and producers who had deals with MCA, Universal and Warner Music Group before going into private practice. In 2000, AOL Time Warner's chairman and CEO, Richard Parsons, who's also chairman of the Apollo Theater Foundation Board, invited me to join the Apollo board of directors. As a board member, I first questioned what we would do to move the brand forward. Parsons urged me to work full-time for the theater.

"My first priority was to focus on our most visible brand, *Showtime at the Apollo*, which is one of the longest-running urban syndicated television shows. We revamped it by hiring two talented women—Suzanne de Passe as executive producer, and the comedienne Mo'Nique as host. This year marks the Apollo's seventieth anniversary, and we've begun renovations to build the 1,500-seat theater into a state-of-the-art facility. I keep in mind that long before *American Idol*, the original *Apollo Amateur Night* was one of the only stages open to talented African-American entertainers. It's an honor to be part of such a rich tradition."

—S.A.M.

WORK&WEALTH

so YOU want to rep the stars?

dealing starts here

GET A LAW DEGREE Whether you intend to practice law or not, a law degree is valuable in all areas of the entertainment business.

FOLLOW YOUR HEART Nicole A. Bernard was advised by her professors to go into a traditional corporate law firm directly after law school, but that did not suit her personality. Consider a nontraditional career path in the business-affairs office of a record label, TV-production company or film studio.

INTERN Whether paid or unpaid, internships offer hands-on experience and an opportunity to learn various aspects of a business. The Apollo Theater will soon offer internships in facility sales, marketing, production and business development. For more information, visit apollotheater.com.

GO PRO Professional organizations like the Black Entertainment and Sports Lawyers Association (BESLA), the American Bar Association (ABA), and the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (NARAS) are good resources for networking. —S.A.M.

Feeling bored or unhappy with your work situation? Some studies show that 75 percent of workers are dissatisfied with their job, says Julie Jansen, author of *I Don't Know What I Want, But I Know It's Not This* (Penguin). The book provides career-assessment tools to help you discover what type of work best suits you. □