

# GOTHAM

## Steinway Auctioning Custom Piano Made to Celebrate Aretha Franklin Biopic 'Respect'

By: [Camila Brooks](#) | August 19, 2021 | [Culture](#)



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Aretha Franklin was the “Queen of Soul,” an absolute legend of the music world whose presence and power continues to inspire. Her story and legacy is currently celebrated in the biopic *Respect*, starring Jennifer Hudson as Franklin and now playing in theaters.

Now, fans looking to connect with the legend of Aretha Franklin have a chance to follow in her musical footsteps.

Steinway & Sons announced a collaboration with MGM Studios to honor the release of *Respect*, auctioning a custom, one-of-a-kind Boston piano inspired by Franklin’s show-stopping legacy. All proceeds from the auctions will support Jennifer and Julia Hudson’s foundation, [The Julian D. King Gift Foundation](#) which provides aid to children in need.





Hudson helped design the bespoke “diva” piano. Painted by the New York Muralists [MenaceResa](#), the instrument is accentuated with bright colors and showstopping patterns. Bedazzled with glittering crystals, the front features the word “respect” in bold black letters, symbolizing one of Franklin’s most renowned songs: her rendition of Otis Redding’s “Respect.” The funky style takes inspiration from the ‘60s era in which Aretha began her journey from soul singer to international phenomenon.



The “Queen of Soul” frequently played Steinway pianos throughout her life and professional career. This collaboration honors Aretha’s fondness for Steinway. The film features Steinway’s pianos in some of its most pivotal scenes.



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“Certainly, everyone at Steinway is very proud that our pianos are featured so prominently in this amazing film,” President of Steinway & Sons Americas Gavin English is quoted on the Steinway website. “The connection to *Respect* has become so much more meaningful for our ability to collaborate with MGM Studios and raise money for Ms. Hudson’s foundation. The Julian D. King Gift Foundation has helped so many young people and will continue to do so for years to come. We are thrilled to be able to donate this piano—an outstanding piece of art in its own right, to honor Julian and to help fund the Foundation’s activities.”

The Julian D. King Gift Foundation was founded by Hudson and her sister Julia in 2018 to honor Hudson’s nephew, Julian. The foundation aims to benefit low-income families in the Chicago area who may not usually have access to the resources they need to succeed, acting as a force of change in children’s health, education, and welfare.

The *Respect* "diva" piano auction began on the film’s Aug. 13 release date and runs through Sept. 27. See pictures of the piano and place a bid in the auction via [Steinway.com](https://www.steinway.com).



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