

# ROUTES

A Guide to African-American Culture

JUNE 10-16, 1991

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

VOL. I NO. 4

LISTINGS INSIDE: ART • CABARETS • CONCERTS • DANCE  
DINING • FREE-FOR-ALL • THEATER

## THE ULTIMATE REUNIONS:

### The Wynn Center Toppers & The Brooklyn Day Parade



Brooklyn Day, June 6, 1991, was to be extra special this year. Lillian Wright knew this the moment she saw the Wynn Center "Toppers" Drum and Bugle Corps march from a practice session in the park of P.S. 305 onto Monroe Street where she and her little girl stood at the curb marching in time. "If I start to cry on Thursday, don't say nothin' " she yelled in their direction.

For most Bedford-Stuyvesant residents, the mere sight of the Toppers recalls the 1950s, 60s and a brief period in the 70s, when this beloved drum and

bugle corps was the star attraction of the Brooklyn Day parade. They were the most sophisticated corps in this annual event, started in 1829 by the Brooklyn Sunday School Union, until 1971, when personnel problems forced them to take a break. Now they're back, and for the first time since they left the field, all 64 members gathered together in what they call "The Ultimate Reunion."

They came from Platsburg, N.Y., the Bronx, Brooklyn, Jamaica, Long Island, even Atlanta, GA., for one more chance to march as they did 20 years ago. Then, days before the event, the neighborhood was buzzing with excitement and preparation. Adults worked. Children worked. Churches worked. Every body was caught up in parade fever. "I remember being with my friends at one or another's house singing and polishing our boots, you know, the white ones with the tassels," Lillian explained animatedly.

Clara Walker, owner of McDonald's Dining Room, on Stuyvesant and Macon, remembers it all so well. "Each church had a float," she said, "with church members floating behind it. And you'd wait for Bethany. You'd wait for Mount Lebanon. You'd want to see what Cornerstone had. It was just fantastic."

It was endless columns of elaborate floats, marching bands, girl scouts, boy scouts, color guards and high steppin' majorettes moving past cheering crowds lining both sides of the streets in rows 5 to 6 to 7 feet deep.

Frantically they waved flags, banners, handkerchiefs, anything to propel themselves into the euphoria, which would build as soon as they heard the familiar drum rhythms of the Topper's corps. When they came into view, dressed in green, black and white uniforms, marching their own special steps, beating their own

special beat, blowing their own special notes, the euphoria would reach a crescendo and explode into shouts and whistles and jumps ups and downs. It was enough to make you cry; enough to make your heart burst with pride.

Yet, the Toppers did more than instill pride. Under the leadership of its founder, Sid Austin, and his assistant, Joe Tucker, it took the kids off of the streets and developed their characters. They learned discipline, tolerance, and how to take orders. Since the Toppers was the first African-American corps to compete professionally in competitions across the nation, the youngsters learned how to deal with people of all races as well.

Regina Ashford-Boles, a 1954 Topper veteran, says "I still practice these qualities and have passed them on to my child and grandchild." Then there was the camaraderie; the sense of family, rounding out a program that made Douglas Smith, an original board member, realized that "If it wasn't for the Corps, I think I would have been a junkie or a wino. But the Corps pulled me away from hanging on the corner singing doo wop songs and drinking wine. Today, Douglas has a successful career as a Fireman. The diversity of professions, in the group, include accountants, architects, doctors, lawyers, publishers and song writers, such as Otis Blackwell who wrote songs for Elvis Presley. The list goes on as well as the efforts. Today, through its Alumni Association, the Toppers continue to help youngsters find their way.

Besides building character, the Toppers established traditions. The homecoming ritual which they performed upon their return from a competition was a jubilant occasion for their community. They would snap onto Gates Avenue from Tompkins. Triumphantly strutting to their anthem "Do the Mambo, Olé, Olé". They were a sight to behold—marching tall, backs straight, chests out. The music would echo throughout the neighborhood, drawing everyone out of their houses and onto the street. It didn't matter what hour they returned, 11pm, midnight, or 1 am. The people just knew that the Toppers were back. And like women welcoming their men back from war, they would run out to greet them and follow them to the Wynn Center, PAL. Near the entrance to the Center, the Toppers would pause before entering, for upwards of one half hour, marching in place, and playing popular tunes and drum solos from their repertoire.

This is how it was during the good old days. And, today?—Well, not everything is quite the same. Afterall, time has added other dimensions—paunches, salt and pepper manes and receding hairlines—for sure. Bulging hips too. But obviously, the spirit is still there. Judging from the parade on Thursday, the Toppers just might be able to bring it back. The bystanders seem to hope so. From their smiles, one could say that they're harboring the same expectations as Tim Rogers, who came to the Corps in 1964.

"On Brooklyn Day," he says, "I expect to feel chills running through my body from my head to my toes; feel excitement from the community which has not seen us in twenty years marching down the street bringing out the flags and instruments and the people. It's going to be a tremendous event, one that Brooklyn has been looking for, dying for, for a very long time. And it's here, now."

—Estelle Epps

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*Editor's note: The onlookers at the parade, danced, shouted and cried as the Toppers marched by. One bystander remarked. "We need the Toppers back in the community. Our children will never forget this wonderful sight." And that it was.*

## DANCE

**Dance Theatre of Harlem**  
*Serenade, Dialogues, Dougla*

June 14, 8pm, June 15, 2 & 8pm, June 16, 3pm

Special: Round-trip concert bus will be available from Columbus Circle one hour before performance (Evening performances only).

Aaron Davis Hall West  
135th St./ Convent Ave  
650-7100

**Ruth Williams Dance**  
**Studio Recital**  
June 16, 2pm

Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center • Broadway / 65th St.  
662-6403

**Janine Williams**, in association with **Dance Theater Workshop** presents *Kuumba*  
June 20-22, 8pm

An African-American women's choreographer showcase: **Valerie Aderemi Adefokun, Maia Claire Garrison, Maiya Greaves, Dor Green, Beverley Prentice-Ryan and Janine Williams**

Dance Theater Workshop  
Bessie Schonberg Theater  
219 W. 19th St. 924-0077

## CABARETS

**Lionel Hampton & Golden Men of Jazz**  
June 11-16, 9 & 11pm

The Blue Note 131 W. 3rd St. 475-8592

**Kenny Barron**, piano & **John Hicks**, piano  
June 3-9

**Chico Freeman**, sax  
**Cyrus Chestnut**, piano  
**Kenny Davis**, bass  
June 10-16

Bradley's 70 University Place / 11th St. 228-6440

**David Murray Octet**  
June 11-16

Condons 117 E. 15th St.  
254-0960

**Soul Sisters**  
June 14, 10pm

**Sunday Gospel Brunch**  
with **Charlie Storey's All Stars**  
June 16, 1pm

Delta 88 332 8th Ave / 26th St. 924-3499

**Noel Pointer**  
June 11-16

Fat Tuesdays 190 3rd Ave / 17th St. 533-7902

**Ronald Shannon Jackson & The Decoding Society**  
*Every Mon.*

Knitting Factory 47 E. Houston St. 219-3055

**Reggae Festival**  
**Lucky Dube**, South Africa  
**Joe Higgs**

**George Wesley & The Dictations**  
June 15

The Ritz 254 W. 54th St.  
541-8900

**McCoy Tyner, Avery Sharpe, Aaron Scott**  
June 11-16

Sweet Basil 8 7th Ave / Bleecker 242-1785

**Walter "Wolfman" Washington**  
June 12-15

Tramps 45 W. 21st St.  
727-7788

**John Medeski Trio**  
June 12-16

**Salsa Meets Jazz**  
*Every Mon. night*

Village Gate Bleecker & Thompson Sts. 475-5120

**David "Fathead" Newman Quintet** featuring **James Clay**  
June 11-16

**Mel Lewis with The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra**  
*Mon. nights*

Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave So. 255-4037

## RESTAURANTS

**A Taste of Soul**  
*Southern & Creole cuisines*  
*New Orleans motif*

248 W. 14th St. (Bet. 7th & 8th Aves) • 255-7735

**Abyssinia**  
*Ethiopian cooking, very informal.*

35 Grand St / Thompson St.  
226-5959

**B. Smith's**  
*Southern & American cuisine*  
*Trendy*

771 Eighth Ave 247-2222

**Cacique Jamaican Restaurant**  
*Jamaican cuisine*

Primarily lunch hour.

106 Greenwich St. (Rector & Carlyle Sts.) • 791-0510

**Caribe**  
*Jamaican cuisine*

Pleasant and informal, cash only.

117 Perry St / Greenwich St  
255-9191

**Copeland's**  
*Southern cuisine*

A Harlem institution.

547 W. 145th St. 234-2457

**Jerk Paradise**  
*Jamaican cuisine, Jerk preparation of meats.*

252 W. 29th St. • 268-7020

**Jezebel**  
*Southern/American cuisine*

Scarfs, swings and sophistication.

630 Ninth Ave / 45th St.  
582-1045

**La Famille Restaurant**  
*Southern cuisine*

Large and informal environment.

2017 5th Ave / 125th St.  
534-9909

**Livi's Restaurant**  
*Caribbean & Southern cuisin*

Brownstone setting.  
Informal

29 E. 126th St. / Madison  
and Fifth Avenues 831-4931

**Lola's**  
*American & Caribbean  
cuisines*

Famous for her Fried  
chicken. Sophisticated

38 W. 22nd St. / Fifth Avenue  
675-6700

**Mr. Leo**  
*Southern Cuisine*

Authentic southern cuisine  
17 W. 27th St. Bet. B'way &  
Fifth Avenue, 532-6673

**Omjavi**  
*British West Indian cuisine*  
Primarily lunch hour take  
out.

112 Chambers St. Between  
Church & West Broadway,  
732-1949

**Sylvia's**  
*Southern cuisine*

Relaxed and informal.

328 Lenox Ave.  
(126 & 127th Sts) 966-0660

**The Blue Nile**  
*Traditional Ethiopian cooking*

103 W. 77th St. / Columbus  
Avenue 580-3232

**The Shark Bar**  
*Southern cuisine*

Trendy

467 Amsterdam Ave.  
874-8500

**Third World Café**  
*Third world cuisine*

Spices used are from west  
Africa. A very special little  
café.

700 W. 125th St. / Westside  
Highway 749-8199

**Wilson's Restaurant and  
Bakery**  
*Southern cuisine*

A Harlem institution  
Amsterdam Ave. / 145th St.  
923-9821

**Zeet Peabody Sugar Reef**  
*West Indian cuisine*

93 2nd Ave. 47-sugar

• **Brooklyn** •

**McDonald's Dining Room**  
*Country home cooking*

327 Stuyvesant Ave (718)  
574-3728 Tues-Sun..

• **Queens** •

**Manhattan Proper Cafe**  
*Southern cuisine*

217-01 Linden Blvd/  
Springfield Blvd (718) 341-  
CAFE

**ART GALLERIES**

**Alternative Museum**  
14 White St. 966-4444

**Art Information  
Center(AIC)**  
AIC services include  
cataloging information on  
over 65,000 artists and 750  
galleries and exhibition  
spaces in New York,  
maintaining a slide file, and  
providing low cost  
consultancy on how to break  
into the New York City  
Gallery network. Dan  
Concholar

280 Broadway / Chambers  
Street room 413 227-0282

**The Cinqué Gallery**  
560 Broadway / Prince Street  
Room 504 373-2707 or  
560-2098

**From Folk to Funk George  
Gravesande Gerald K. Deas**  
June 6-15

Exhibit includes the world's  
first Afrocentric clock and  
clocks in general.

**Design Masters Intergroup  
Gallerie**

301 Cathedral Parkway  
666-8440

**Essie Green Galleries**  
**Romare Bearden Prints**  
419A Convent Ave. 368-9635

**June Kelly Gallery**  
591 Broadway 266-1660

**Manhattan East Gallery**  
202 E. 76th St. 988-5802

**Robertson's African Arts**  
*By appointment only.*

Small gallery of African  
artifacts

36 W. 22nd St. 4th Fl.  
675-4045

• **Brooklyn** •

**Ade Gallery**  
**Nigerian Art**  
260 State St. 643-3072

**Alexian Fine Arts**  
African-American painters,  
sculptors and  
photographers are a large  
part of the collection

25 Flatbush Ave. (718)  
638-4773

*Artmen Sextet*

**J.P. Dillard**  
**Luther Freeman**  
**Jacques Goode**  
**Louis Mims**  
**Robert Norman**  
**Scott & Joseph Selsey**  
June 5-21

**Dorsey Gallery**  
553 Rogers Ave.  
718-771-3803

**Gallery Obiagali African  
American Art**  
296 New York Ave. (718)  
467-3882

**I WANT TO FOLLOW  
ROUTES**  
**A Guide to African-American Culture**

Old Chelsea Station, P.O. BOX 20103  
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HERE'S \$36 FOR A 1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION.

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## CONCERTS

**Andre Watts, pianist**  
June 12, 13, & 15, 8pm; June 14, 2pm

**Performs Brahms: Academic Festival Overture, Mozart: Symphony No. 39 and Prokofiev: Piano Concerto.**  
Conductor **Andre Previn**  
Avery Fisher Hall/Lincoln Center • Broadway / 65th St.  
• 874-2424

**Stylistics, Ray, Goodman & Brown**  
June 15, 8pm

Beacon Theatre 2124  
Broadway / 74th St. 496-7070

**Quest, with Ron McClure,**  
bass, **Billy Hart,** drums  
June 17, 8pm

The Mannes College of  
Music 150 W. 85th St.  
580-1738

**Olodum, Lights in a Fat City, Bongo Logic**  
June 14, 7pm

Brazilian Percussion  
orchestra playing Bahian  
carnival music spiced with  
Caribbean rhythms.

Symphony Space  
Broadway / 95th St. 864-5400

**8th Annual Benefit Concert for Morehouse College**  
June 15, 5pm

**Claude Jay featuring Purple Magic, Carolyn Blair, Darlene Check, Angelisa Guilford; Musical director, Daniel Ryans**

*Special guests: Marie Brooks Caribbean Dance Theater & The New York Boys Choir*  
\$15 Admission

St. Peter's Church 54th St. &  
Lexington Ave • 840-1234 or  
718 638-2543

## THEATER

**Once on This Island**  
A musical set in the  
Caribbean, about a poor  
girl's passion for the son of a  
wealthy landowner.

Booth Theatre • W.45th St/  
Broadway • 239-6200.

**Our Young Black Men Are Dying And Nobody Seems To Care**

An original music play by  
**James Chapman** about the  
destruction of young men  
by drug abuse, crime, police  
brutality, alcoholism,  
poverty and AIDS.

Castillo Cultural Center 500  
Greenwich St 941-5800

**Passin'**

Thur., 7pm, Fri.-Sat., 8pm,  
Sat.-Sun., 4pm

*Written & directed by Bonnie Wright, featuring Dan Lorge, Judy Alvarez, Debra Wilson, Bernadette Jones, Rashida Turner & David Lomas*

American Theatre of Actors  
• 314 W. 54th St. (Bet 8th &  
9th Aves) 993-0070/926-9416

**The Legacy**

June 14-16 & June 21-23 Fri.  
7:30, Sat., 2pm & 7:30pm,  
Sun., 3pm

**Gordon Nelson's History of Gospel Music, directed by Elmo Terry Morgan.**

The National Black Theater  
2033 Fifth Ave • 427-5615

**Julius Caesar Set in Africa**  
Through June 29, Thur.-Sat.  
7:30pm, \$10 admission

*Adapted and directed by Rome Neal*

Nuyorican Poets' Cafe 236 E  
3rd St/Bet. Aves B & Q •  
465-3167

**The Goat**

A reflective comedy, set in  
the Brooklyn waterfront  
home of an African-  
American nurse who, with  
the aid of an exotic African  
god, enriches the lives of  
lost young people. Directed  
by **Beatrice Winde.**

Perry Street Theater 117  
Perry St. • 255-7190

**Amakhosi: Citizen Mind**  
June 13,14,15 & 16, 9:30pm

A play about life in  
Zimbabwe.

Performance Space 122 1st  
Av / 9th St. 477-5288

**The Tragedy of Macbeth** by  
**Stephen Rayne**

June 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 8pm  
June 15, 19, 22, 2pm & 8pm,  
June 16 & 23, 3pm

A production inspired by  
the famine, waste and  
political turmoil in many  
contemporary African  
states. The cast includes  
some of Britain's finest  
actors of African descent  
from the Royal Shakespeare  
Company and the Royal  
National Theatre.

St. Bartholomew's Church  
Park Ave / 50th St. 307-7171

**Anatomy of the Sexes**  
*Two One Act Plays*

**Brown Gals Rising**  
*Written and directed by  
Cecelia Antoinette*

**The Box**

*Written by David Bear  
Smith, directed by Wayne  
Jelks*

June 13-16 & June 20-23  
Thurs.-Sat., 8pm, Sun., 3pm  
\$10 admission

Theatre 22, 54 West 22nd St.  
(Bet. 5th & 6th Aves) (718)  
398-6426

### • Brooklyn •

**Satan Never Sleeps**  
Through June 30

Comedy-drama with music.  
It's all about Satan and how  
he intervenes in our lives.  
Produced and directed by  
**Marjorie Moon.**

The Billie Holiday Theater  
1368 Fulton St.  
(718)-636-0918

**Rain of Emotion**  
June 14 & 15, 9pm

**A'ma Sakura Ka, poet-  
dramatist, Adiodun,  
Amadilia Best, Gregory  
Ince, Kevin Nathaniel.**  
Guest artist: **Jacinto Taias  
Riddick & Donna Coulter.**

St. Luke's Indoda Entsha  
Performance Space 259  
Washington Ave  
(Willoughby & DeKalb  
Aves) • (718) 638-7622 or  
(212) 638-8432

## MUSEUMS & CULTURAL CENTERS

**Africa Explores: 20th  
Century African Art**  
Exhibit explores the  
continuing vitality of  
traditional art which  
coexists today with a  
modern art that is

uniquely African.

**The Center for African Art**  
*Through December '91*

54 E. 68th St.(Bet Mad. & Lex. Aves.) 861-1200, and

**The New Museum for Contemporary Art**  
*Through Aug. 18*

•**Gallery Talk**

**Mobile Traditions: The Question of Art Historical Globalism**

*June 15, 2pm*

Lecture will address the ideologies that influence Western museums selection, display, and definition of what constitutes art in another culture.

The New Museum for Contemporary Art 583 Broadway / Houston St. 219-1222

**Kwame Brathwaite**  
*Through June*

*Two photo exhibits:*

**The Apollo Then and Now & Brother Bob - Memories of Bob Marley**

Harlem School of the Arts  
645 St. Nicholas Ave  
926-4100

**Joan Loguc: Video Portrait Gallery**

*June 15- July 28*

Focuses on important women in history.

International Center of Photography 1130 Fifth Ave 860-1777

**Robert Colescott**  
*Emergency Room (1990)*  
presently on display.

Museum of Modern Art 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9400

**The African Presence in the Americas**  
*Through December*

**African-Americans In Space Science**  
*Through December*

*Guided Tours by appointment only.*

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture • 515 Lenox Ave./135th St. 491-2000

**Memory and Metaphor**  
**Romare Bearden**  
*Through August 11*

Studio Museum of Harlem  
144 W. 125th St. 864-4500

•**Bronx**•

**James Buxton, Painted Wood and Sculpture**  
*Through October 31*

Buxton's work involves such personally significant issues as religion and motherhood.

The Bronx Museum of Art Satellite Gallery at Hebrew Hospital for Chronic Sick 801 Co-Op City Boulevard 379-5020

**The Nearest Edge of the World: Art and Cuba Now**  
*Through August 4*

This exhibition is comprised of drawings, paintings, collages, installations, photography and sculpture by nine Cuban artists. and,

**The Third Emerging Expression Biennial: The Third Dimension and Beyond**  
*Through June 23*

An exhibition of sculpture, installations, and video by artists who utilize computer technology as a tool to explore space and time.

The Bronx Museum of Art 1040 Grand Concourse 681-6181

•**Staten Island**•

**Black photographers: 1840 - 1940**  
*Through September 2*

**Gordon Parks, James Van der Zee, Austin Hansen, and the Goodridge Brothers**—nomads who roved in the late 1800s hundreds through New York, Pennsylvania and Michigan shooting portraits.

Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences 75 Stuyvesant Pl. Staten Island 718-727-1135

**FREE-FOR-ALL**

*Lecture: Divine Script: The Philosophic Richness of Cameroon New World Impact*

**Robert Farris Thompson,**  
*lecturer and,*

**Concert: Jelón Viera and DanceBrazil**  
*June 18, Lecture, 6pm, Concert, 7pm*

Cooper Hewitt Museum 2 E. 91st St. 860-6868

Olodum  
*June 16, 3pm*

See Music section June 14 for comment.

Rumsey Field In Central Park/72nd St. & 5th Ave. 529-1955

**Amakhosi: Stitsha**  
*June 12, 12:15pm*

See Theater section for comments.

Continental Atrium 180 Maiden La/ Front St. 432-0900

**YOUTH**

**Mapapa Acrobats,** from Kenya  
*June 10 & 11, 3:30 & 5:30pm*  
Triplex Theatre 1\*

**Lalela**  
*June 14, 10am & 12 noon, June 15, 3:30pm June 16, 7:30pm*

Three storytellers from Swaziland and other southern African countries.  
Triplex Theatre 1\*

**Four Corners**  
*June 10,10:30 am & 12:30pm*

**World Myths & Magical Tales**  
*June 13, 10:30am & 12:30pm June 14, 10:30am, June 16, 11am & 1pm*

Triplex Theatre 2\* "Triplex Theatres 1 & 2 Borough of Manhattan Community College 199 Chambers St/ West St. 618-1980

**Summer Camp**  
Camp Minisink, New York's oldest accredited camp for African- American youth, is now registering boys and girls, ages 7-15.  
*Session, June 27-August 16*  
Minisink Town House, 646 Lenox Ave. 368-8400

**ARTscape**  
Daycamp for Students 4-18  
*July 8-Aug 16*

The Harlem School for the Arts is a private, not-for profit arts organization offering a year-round program of music, dance, theater arts and visual arts.  
Harlem School of The Arts  
645 St. Nicholas Ave