

ROUTES

A Weekly Guide to African-American Culture

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**LISTINGS INSIDE: ART • CABARETS • CONCERTS •
THEATER • RESTAURANTS • AND MORE!**

OWNING SELF

“The theatre can raise our consciousness to a whole new scope of possibilities. But only if the house isn’t empty. That’s why I decided to produce a few themes relevant to our situation,” *Homegrown* producer Adetunde Samuel says as he leans back and crosses his arms over his chest.

Tunde Samuel knows no boundaries when it comes to getting the job done. Easily mistaken for a defensive lineman, wrestler, or bouncer, he’s a sturdy tower of a man. But the conversation of the managing producer and director of the Performing Arts Program for the National Black Theatre is delivered in hushed tones as he expresses the formidable opinions and observations of a man who lives large.

In addition to *Homegrown*, the Joseph Holland play that closed April 19 and is due to reopen in July, Tunde’s current theatre production credits include *Song of Sheba* scheduled to tour Japan in May; *The Legacy* slated for a midwest tour during the ‘92-’93 season; *Face to Face* due to open in D.C. in March 1993; *Third Rhythm*, expected to run on Broadway this summer; and *Tell Pharaoh*, geared for grades 5-12 and being performed at NBT (2033 5 Ave.) Tuesdays through Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. and *Easy Livin’*, a play about the life of trumpeter Clifford Brown.

When Tunde explained that *Homegrown*—which explores the tribulations and triumphs experienced in a homeless shelter for men—is the third of a trilogy of plays targeting contemporary issues plaguing the African American man, I teasingly accused him of being a sexist. He laughed and good-naturedly accepted the label, but with



an explanation. "Women will come to the theatre. But men usually won't come unless some woman drags them in. Art can be a powerful tool with which to teach and learn, but only if it's experienced.

"Our young black men are losing themselves, wasting away. We have to pose questions, offer constructive comments and criticisms and reinforce the power of the family by providing portraits of the strong male role models often absent from the media and our lives." The trilogy is considered a success. The first two plays in the series, *The Third Rhythm* and *Easy Livin'*, increased male attendance by twenty percent.

Tunde wasn't always interested in the arts. In the late sixties, he was a psychology major at Kingsborough Community College with a penchant for understanding what and how things clicked when he met an Afro-centric couple named the Malles who exposed him to a world of new information. They talked to him about Nkrumah's Ghana. Their awareness stirred his own and he began to think of Africa as the motherland. Then when Dr. King was assassinated, Tunde found himself crying uncontrollably, mourning the death of a noble man bravely fighting an ignoble system for simple rights, and he knew that he wanted to dedicate his own life to making a difference.

Taking every cent he had, Tunde quit college (a grand tragedy to the Samuel clan since he was the first in the family to attend college). He traveled around the country working at odd jobs

to broaden his understanding and experience beyond what he'd known in a little cubbyhole called Brooklyn. After nine months, he worked his way back to the New York City, discovering the East Wind complex on 125th Street.

The complex was home to two fledgling, avant garde art groups: the Last Poets, a fresh, new, radical, revolutionary trio of performing poets now credited with originating today's rap and the National Black Theatre whose founder and artistic director, Barbara Ann Teer, pioneered an acting method exploring the cycles of Nigger-Negro-militant-nationalist-revolutionary-evolutionary through which we struggle to become whole from our fragments.

It was in this atmosphere charged with

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creative expression and self-actualization that Tunde realized what is now his life's work. "This was 1969, when people believed that all things were possible. These two groups taught me that there are no limits when you are free; freedom is not a word that can be talked into being or a gift that's given, it is the act of owning the self.

Of the two groups, NBT was the one that continued to grow; the Last Poets broke up. The East Wind complex became too small for NBT's needs and they moved to larger quarters on 125th Street. "I hung around and absorbed everything. I re-enrolled in Brooklyn College with a theatre major this time although I have yet to get my degree. But I got a brilliant education at NBT working every job in the theatre from stage managing to cleaning the toilets. The National Black Theatre is run on a family structure. Everyone pitches in and no job's too low or no person too good to do the work that needs doing."

Soul Fusion gave Tunde his first AUDELCO award of Best Performance by a Male in a Musical in 1982; his second AUDELCO (same category) came five years later for *The Legacy*. He was ready for bigger things. He became a producer after listening to so many of his friends complain, "Ain't no work for black actors out here." Being an evolutionary man, Tunde said to himself, "NBT can produce these people," and then he did it in a big, big way. He put together large casts of more than fifteen and they worked at NBT in a slew of award-winning productions then and now.

"The National Black Theatre is still performing on 125th Street," Tunde said. "And we've acquired the entire block at Fifth Avenue where we've constructed a 10-million dollar complex that in addition to the soon-to-open theatre space, houses two churches (Harlem Tabernacle and the Philadelphia Baptist), a mosque (The Nation of Islam's Mosque #7), the GADABOUT Restaurant, the Uptown Comedy Club, and a BRAVO supermarket due to open this summer. A few other commercial spaces are still available. Diversification keeps money in the community and reciprocal business helps to maintain the community's strength. Ownership is the key.

"Content to rent, many other celebrated black theatres have lost their homes and sometimes even themselves by allowing the landlord to rule their houses. They didn't look far enough down the road to see the hard times coming. The NBT is about building an institution that will outlive our children. We have to rediscover and work the concept of family and the future in our homes, our businesses, and our lives.

"My wife, Bukanla, and my two sons, Obataiye and Oshunbunmi, keep me focussed and provide my purpose in life. Empowering them keeps our family strong, free, and owning self."

—Perri Gaffney

Letters To The Editor

I'm interested in subscribing to your magazine for six months. Enclosed you will find my check for \$18. Thank you, and God Bless You.

Sincerely,
Barbara Evans
Bronx, NY

That article on *Aires Ladies* was really interesting!

Audrey Ross
NYC

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Good Luck
Diane Sakeyfio
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Joanne Brackeen & Cecil McBee

April 27 -May 2
Bradley's • 70
University Place • 228-
6440

Ray Bryant Trio

Apr 28-May 3
Condon's • 117 East
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Magic Slim & The Teardrops

Apr 28-May 2
Chicago B.L.U.E.S. • 73
8th Ave. • 255- 7373

Cedar Walton, Ralph Moore, David Williams,

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Apr 28- May 3
Fat Tuesday's • 190
Third Ave at 17th St.
•533-7902

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Apr 29-May 2 & May 6-9
Knickerbocker Bar &
Grill • 33 University
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714 St. Nicholas Ave •
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CLUBS & CABARETS
continued from Page 4

• **Lonnie Youngblood & The Blood Brothers**
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• **Ike Smalls Trio**
Wed-Thur

• **Bill Saxton Trio**
Mon

Showman's • 2321 8th Ave • Harlem • 864-8941

•
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S.O.B.'s • 204 Varick St at Houston • 243-4940

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Tommy Flanagan Trio
Apr 28-May 3
Sweet Basil • 88 Seventh Ave So. • 242-1785

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Mingus Big Band
Every Wednesday Night
Time Cafe • 380 Lafayette St • 533-7000

•
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continued from Page 5

• Queens •

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*THEATER continued from
Page 9*

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Theater Arielle • 432
West 42nd St • 967-7079

Two Trains Running

Written by **August Wilson** and directed by **Lloyd Richards**. Set in the Hill District of Pittsburgh in 1969 *Two Trains Running* takes place in Memphis Lee's neighborhood restaurant. The action of the play coincides with a lavish funeral for a flamboyant local preacher and a crowd assembling Malcolm X's birthday. Stars **Larry Fishburne** and **Roscoe Lee Browne**

The Walter Kerr Theatre
• 219 W. 48th St • (212)
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• **Brooklyn** •

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Dance Theatre of Harlem—"Footprints Dressed in Red"

DANCE

Lines Contemporary Ballet

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Joyce Theater • 175 8th
Ave • 242-0800

• **Brooklyn** •

Dance Theatre of Harlem

Apr 28-May 10
Brooklyn Academy of Music • 30 Lafayette Ave • (212) 307-4100

ART GALLERIES
continued from Page 10

ART GALLERIES

Africa

The Old and The New
Through May 9
Paintings, Sculpture,
Wall Hangings
The Bratton Gallery • 20
Cornelia Street (West
4th St & 6th Ave) • 675-
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The Migrations of Meaning

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**Angel Suarez, Bennie
Lusane, Betye Saar**
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42nd St • 695-6135

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• Brooklyn •

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Year Retrospective**
Through May 11

Featuring works by
"Where We At", Weusi
Artists & others

The Center for Art and
Culture of Bedford
Stuyvesant, Inc. • 1368
Fulton St • (718) 636-
6949

Roots

Through May 5
Work by **Irene Young**.
Of her work Ms. Young
says "Landscapes with
roots, doorways, win-
dows, ladders, trees
reaching into the earth
and high in the sky, are
all symbolic imagery
that I use in the pursuit
of a deeper understand-
ing of our inner and
outer world. Shadows,
burial grounds, (modern
as well as ancient) tie
us together as human
beings in a common
bond that entails ways
of dealing with the sad-
ness, darkness, and loss
that is a part of our
lives."

Living Room Gallery of
Saint Peter's Church •
54th St & Lexington
Ave • 935-2200

**Songs of
Innocence/Songs of
Experience**
Through Jun 3

Examining playground
politics, family struc-
ture, and gender identi-
fication, this exhibition
challenges the myth of
childhood innocence.
Gary Simmons and
other artists.

The Whitney Museum of
American Art at
Equitable Center * 7th
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• Queens •

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Featuring the Oil and
Acrylic paintings by
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Valein I, Valein II &
Valbrun**; sculpture by
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The Bratton Gallery, See
Art Galleries listings.

MUSEUMS & CULTURAL CENTERS

Come all you Gallant Heroes: The World of the Revolutionary Soldier

Through Aug 14
A chronicle of the experiences of soldiers in the Continental Army during the War for American

Independence. Excerpts from diaries and official records are posted on the walls, including one from ex-slave and free-man Jacob Francis.

Fraunces Tavern
Museum • 54 Pearl St •
425-1776

Harlem Fashion Museum

Authentic slave dresses; a copy of the inaugural gown of Mary Todd Lincoln made by former slave Elizabeth Keckley; five gowns designed by the late Ann Lowe, designer of the wedding gown worn by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis when she married John F. Kennedy; a dress made by Rosa Parks; costumes from Broadway plays *The Wiz*, *Eubie*, *Grind* and *Bubbling Brown Sugar*.
155 /W. 126th St (Bet. Lenox & ACP Blvd) •
666-1320

Bridges and Boundaries: African-Americans and American Jews Through July 19

The exhibit examines the relationship between African-Americans and American Jews in the twentieth century, revealing a dramatic and complex story of cooperation and conflict.

The Jewish Museum at the New York Historical Society • Central park West at 77th Street •
399-3391

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Royal Art of Benin

Through Sept 13
One hundred-sixty-three cast bronze and carved ivory sculptures examining court life in the former West African Kingdom of Benin, now southern Nigeria.

Metropolitan Museum of Art • 1000 Fifth Ave •
879-5500

Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawing Through May 5

This exhibit records important and multifaceted role of drawing in art today. Among the artists exhibited: **Jean Michel Basquiat**, **Martin Puryear**, and **Glen Ligon**.

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

What is American Through Jun 1992

Through lectures, concerts, films, and illustrated programs, the presenters will explore what it means to be American, and what is unique about American culture.

Gospel Music: Sister Sadie and the Famous Biblettes

May 2, 7:30 pm
Sister Sadie Bridges,
Ruby Williams,
Myrlene Miller, **Diane Wright**, **Sherry Griffen**,
James, **Fufflin** and
Levee.

The powerful rhythms

and joyful harmonies of African-American gospel song have shaped the contours of American popular music, yet the history of this uniquely american art form has only recently begun to unfold. Sister Sadie and the Famous Biblettes' dynamic style combines with the emotional fervor of the 1950s female gospel groups with a smoother contemporary choir sound.

The New York Historical society • 170 Central Park West • 873-3400

• **Guided Tours**

By appointment only

• **JazzArts 1930s-1990s** Through Jun 30

An exhibition of paintings, collages, photographs, artifacts, books and ephemera, reveals the impact this most modern musical form and its leading artists have had on contemporary, predominantly African-American artists. Featuring the works of visual artists **Romare Bearden**, **Sam Middleton** and **Allen Stringfellow** and photographers **Chuck Stewart** and **Milt Hinton**.

MUSEUMS & CULTURAL...
continued from Page 12

•**New World Africans:
19th Century Images of
Blacks in South
America and the
Caribbean**

Through Jun 30

An exhibition of rare, informative images documenting various aspects of the black population—slave and free—in South America and the Caribbean during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture • 515 Malcolm X Blvd at 135th St • 491-2200

•**The Art of Archibald J. Motley, Jr.**

Through Jun 7

The first retrospective exhibition of the work of painter **Archibald John Motley, Jr.** (1891-1981). *The Art of Archibald J. Motley, Jr.* includes over fifty

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works representing his career from the late teens to the early 1970s.

•**Africa and the
Diaspora: Selections
from the Permanent
Collection**

Through Jun 7

Ninety-five paintings, examining the influence of African art and culture on the art, artists, and culture of the Americas and the Caribbean.

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

•**Brooklyn**•

The New Merengue

Through May 3
The migration of Caribbean and African-Americans to Brooklyn is the subject of the Museum's 29th Grand Lobby project.

The Brooklyn Museum • 200 Eastern Parkway • (718) 638-5000

•**Westchester**•

**Photographic Images of
19th Century African-
Americans**

Through May 3

These photographs document the existence of a successful and prosperous class of African-Americans in the 19th century.

The Hudson River Museum • 511 Warburton Ave • Yonkers • (914) 963-4550

LANDMARKS

•**Queens**•

Louis Armstrong House

This building was home to the jazz legend from 1943-1971. Tour arranged by appointment only

34-56 107th St • Corona • (718) 478-8274

Scott Joplin's Grave

The man known for Ragtime was buried on April 5, 1917 in St. Michael's Cemetery. The pauper's grave was unmarked until a plaque was laid in 1974 reading "Scott Joplin, American Composer."

72-02 Astoria Blvd • East Elmhurst • Grave 5, Row 2, Plot 5 • (718) 278-3240

**York College/Black
American Heritage
Foundation Music
History Archive**

This collection of material relative to African-American musicians and composers connected to Southeast Queens includes original manuscripts of **Wilbur "Buck" Clayton**, rare recordings of **Duke Ellington**, and a saxophone used by **Al Sears**. Southeast Queens is closely associated with the jazz movement; **Fats Waller**, **Count Basie**, **Billie Holiday**, **Lester Young**, and **Brook Benton** also lived

LANDMARKS
continued from Page 13

in the area.
94-20 Guy Brewer Blvd •
Jamaica • (718) 262-2644

FILM

April '92 Film Festival
Through Apr 30
*An extensive list of films
to be shown exists.
Please call for Titles and
Showtimes.*

Art Gallery of the ACP,
Jr. State Office Building
• 163 W. 125th St at 7th
Ave • 873-5040

FREE FOR ALL

**Rendezvous With
Sauce: Rethinking the
Melting Pot**
May 1, 12:30 pm
Garland Farwell once
again delights and
amazes with his satirical
antics as cultural, racial,
sexual and ideological
diversity are put to the
test in a special May Day
sporting celebration.
Larger-than-life-sized
puppets and collaborat-
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and dancers create this
2nd Annual site-specific
May Day Celebration.
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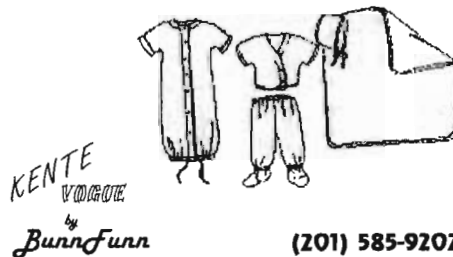
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al leaders and educators,
audiovisual presenta-
tions and discussions of
issues with community
participation.
Interdisciplinary pro-
gram involving various
CCNY departments and
faculty.

The City College • North
Academic Complex •
Convent Ave & 138th St
• 650-6252

**Body and Soul: The
Alvin Ailey American
Dance Theater Exhibit**
Through May 11
The exhibition docu-
ments the troupe's rich
heritage with a wide-
variety of rarely seen
items gathered
from the archives

FREE-FOR-ALL
continued from Page 14

of the Library and the Ailey company.
Library's Main Gallery •
40 Lincoln Center Plaza
• 870-1670

Tribute to The Black Fashion Museum

Through May 2
This exhibit celebrates both African-American fashion design and The Black Fashion Museum.
Fashion Institute of Technology • Shirley Goodman Resource Center • 7th Ave & 27th St • 760-7848

• **Brooklyn** •

Medgar Evers College Film Festival: African American Expression Through Jazz

Through Nov
Call for dates and time.
Medgar Evers College • Bedford Building • El Malik El Shabazz Study Lounge • 1150 Carroll St • (718) 270-5013

• **Queens** •

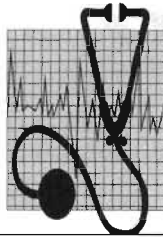
On The Home Front
Apr 27, 7:30 pm
This play by Gail Kriegel is about lessons to be learned from the Vietnam war. Teacher Phyllis Mason's husband died in Vietnam. While teaching English to Vietnam veterans as a memorial to her husband, Ms. Mason learns some valuable lessons from the black and hispanic men in her class. Following the performance, there will be a discussion with the audience and actors.

Queens Borough Public Library • Laurelton Branch • 134-26 225th St • (718) 528-2822

Griots in Concert

Apr 27, 7:30 pm
Storytelling and music from Africa, the United States and the Caribbean.
Queens Borough Public Library • 144-20 243rd Street • Rosedale • (718) 528-8490.

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799 Nostrand Ave • Brooklyn, NY 11225

• **Westchester** •

So We Too, African Roots, African Strength
Through April 30
This educational exhibit includes the replication of the slave berth and explores indigenous 17th century Africans.

Acbaw Gallery • 128 So. 4th Ave • Mt. Vernon • (914) 667-7278.

• **Long Island** •

Black College Guide
The Job and Education

Information Center houses a new electronic program which allows patrons to access detailed information on a vast array of topics related to Black colleges. This program gives details about 84 Black colleges throughout the United States.

Freeport Memorial Library • W. Merrick Road & So. Ocean Ave • (516) 379-3274

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