



Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) Announces Lineup for BAM R&B Festival at Fort Greene Park

Fall in-person concerts feature a bold and eclectic lineup of artists— Matthew Whitaker, Mykal Rose, Stew & the Negro Problem, Valerie June, and more

Two weekends of free live music, Oct 2—Oct 3 & Oct 9—Oct 10

BAM R&B Festival at Fort Greene Park

Sat—Sun Oct 2 & 3 and Oct 9 & 10, 4—7pm

FREE

Produced by Danny Kapilian

Sat, Oct 2	Matthew Whitaker
Sun, Oct 3	Mykal Rose
Sat, Oct 9	Stew & the Negro Problem
Sun, Oct 10	Valerie June

September 20, 2021/Brooklyn, NY—BAM R&B Festival returns for two weekends of free performances at **Fort Greene Park**, set for **Saturdays and Sundays, October 2—3 and October 9—10**. The widely-known festival, which has grown to become one of Brooklyn's beloved outdoor traditions, brings together the community and groundbreaking artists—from music legends to bold new voices across the genre of R&B. **BAM R&B Festival at Fort Greene Park** marks BAM's first live, in-person music performances since the pandemic shuttered arts venues and live performances in March 2020. The concerts will take place outdoors with the most up-to-date safety protocols in place for artists, audiences, and staff.

BAM R&B Festival at Fort Greene Park will boast an impressive and versatile lineup, showcasing musical artists from Brooklyn and around the world, including Memphis singer-songwriter **Valerie June**, Tony Award-winning playwright **Stew** with his band **The Negro Problem**, jazz pianist **Matthew Whitaker**, and the Grammy Award-winning singer **Mykal Rose**, formerly of Black Uhuru. The fall concerts also feature dashing jazz saxophonist **Lakecia Benjamin** and her band **the Soul Squad**, Queens-born soul surrealist **duendita**, and more. Hi-res images of the artists can be accessed [here](#).

"After the past challenging year, we are thrilled to bring the energy and dynamism of our beloved R&B concerts to Fort Greene Park. The Festival celebrates the versatility and undeniable influence R&B has on other genres by bringing together an eclectic lineup of music legends and bold new voices, each with their own distinctive style and sound," said

BAM Co-Interim President, **Coco Killingsworth**. “Our beloved concerts will continue to bring free music and incredible talent to Brooklyn. And we can't wait to welcome you back.”

“It is a tremendous personal and professional delight to continue the 26-year-legacy of the BAM R&B Festival, this year in Fort Greene Park. Our headliners [Matthew Whitaker, Mykal Rose, Stew & the Negro Problem, and Valerie June] are all uniquely creative artists, making deep and lasting impressions on the music scene,” said BAM R&B Festival Producer, **Danny Kapilian**. “Presenting these free fall concerts is our way of providing positive inspiration and generous spirit for all Brooklyn and NYC communities.”

The free outdoor concert series is not only a hub for artistic performances but a celebration of the impact of rhythm and blues on contemporary culture. Since its debut in 1995, the series has become a favorite destination for Brooklyn music lovers. Past performers include Andra Day, PJ Morton, Tank and the Bangas, Wilson Pickett, Nona Hendryx, Ashford and Simpson, Dr. John, Angelique Kidjo, Vernon Reid, George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic, Van Hunt, Savion Glover, Marcus Miller, Richie Havens, and many more.

In its 26th season, BAM's longest-running music series comes to Fort Greene Park, a beacon in Brooklyn's Greene/Clinton Hill neighborhood. A multitude of musicians have called this area home, including Erykah Badu, Max Roach, Randy Weston, Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Betty Carter, Yasiin Bey, Bill Lee, Digable Planets, Lisa Fischer, Talib Kweli, Vernon Reid, Justine Skye, Rev. Hezekiah Walker, Toshi Reagon, and Carla Cook to name a few.

All concerts are FREE, require no tickets, and take place at Fort Greene Park. The concert stage is located on the lawn at Myrtle Avenue. Visit BAM.org for updates.

BAM requires proof of Covid-19 vaccination and a valid ID for all attendees over the age 12. Cloth face masks or coverings are required at all times. All performances occur outdoors with health and safety protocols developed in accordance with New York State regulations and in consultation with medical professionals for the safety of our artists, audiences, and staff. Capacities for all events will comply with government-issued guidelines. Current protocols can be found [here](#) and will continue to be updated as they evolve.

For press, information contact Cynthia Tate at ctate@bam.org

A full list of performers can be found below and at BAM.org/FortGreene.

BAM R&B Festival at Fort Greene Park: Matthew Whitaker

Opening Act: **Lakecia Benjamin and the Soul Squad**

Sat, Oct 2, 4—7pm

Jazz pianist/organist Matthew Whitaker is a lifelong musician studying piano and drums at The Filomen M. D'Agostino Greenberg Music School of the Lighthouse Guild in NYC, the only community music school for the blind and visually impaired in the US. The former child prodigy was recently profiled on CBS's *60 Minutes* and has wowed audiences from the

Newport Jazz Festival and the Kennedy Center—to the Apollo Theater, to name a few. He brings his irresistible virtuosity to Brooklyn this fall.

And ready to electrify spirits in her native NYC, the dazzling jazz saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin reunites with her band, Soul Squad, for a night of music mixing jazz, hip-hop, soul, and funk.

BAM R&B Festival at Fort Greene Park: Mykal Rose

Opening Act: **duendita**

Sun, Oct 3, 4—7pm

Mykal Rose, the Grammy Award-winning voice formerly of Black Uhuru, got his start opening for Roberta Flack and playing with the Fab 5 and other hotel showbands in the early 1970s in Kingston, Jamaica. As lead vocalist, he and other Black Uhuru members won reggae's first Grammy award for the album Anthem in 1984.

Queens native duendita is an internally recognized R&B and neo-soul artist who lives in New York and Berlin. Her latest release, "bio" (pronounced "bee-yo")—is an "existential dance song," in her words.

BAM R&B Festival at Fort Greene Park: Stew & The Negro Problem perform selections from Passing Strange & Brooklyn Omnibus

Sat, Oct 9, 4—7pm

Stew & The Negro Problem, along with special guests, come careening back into Brooklyn with highlights from their groundbreaking, Tony Award-winning musical Passing Strange (the subject of Spike Lee's 2009 film of the same name). The audience can expect a super-rare airing of deep cuts from their BAM-commissioned Brooklyn Omnibus and selections they wrote for Spike Lee's Netflix series, She's Gotta Have It. This fall, Stew also teaches "Singer + Song = Story" at Harvard's School of Theater, Dance & Media—a course he says is "charged with the modest task of re-inventing theater."

BAM R&B Festival at Fort Greene Park: Valerie June

Sun, Oct 10, 4—7pm

Tennessee-born and Brooklyn-based singer-songwriter Valerie June has been recording and performing since she was 19 years old, climbing from Memphis coffee houses to national TV performances and getting name-checked by Bob Dylan. Her latest album, The Moon and Stars: Prescriptions for Dreamers, weaves a tapestry of folk, soul, gospel, country, blues, psychedelia, and symphonic pop, performed by an eclectic lineup of musicians with a dizzying palette of instruments (flute and banjo, mbira and Mellotron, saxophone and synth) absorbed in free-flowing experimentation.

Credits

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General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, is the newest addition to the BAM campus and houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas is Brooklyn's only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming.

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.

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