

BAM presents DanceAfrica 2015: *Brazilian rhythms. African roots.*
May 22—25

Balé Folclórico da Bahia brings its crowd-rousing dance to Brooklyn

The festival pays tribute to its beloved founding artistic director Chuck Davis

The 38th annual celebration also includes a Late Night Dance Party, *FilmAfrica*, and the DanceAfrica Bazaar

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the 2014—2015 Season Sponsor

DanceAfrica 2015: *Brazilian rhythms. African roots.*
Artistic Director Chuck Davis and Artistic Director Designate Abdel R. Salaam

Balé Folclórico da Bahia (Brazil)
Bambara Drum and Dance Ensemble (Bronx)
BAM/Restoration DanceAfrica Ensemble (Brooklyn)

Lighting design by Al Crawford

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House (30 Lafayette Ave)
May 22 & 23 at 7:30pm; May 23 at 2pm; May 24 & 25 at 3pm
Tickets start at \$20 (half-price for ages 16 & under)

Brooklyn, NY/April 13, 2015—DanceAfrica, the nation's largest African dance festival, returns to BAM for the 38th year with its traditional Memorial Day weekend extravaganza of dance, music, film, and community events. Brazil's foremost folk dance company **Balé Folclórico da Bahia** leads this year's program with the theme *Brazilian rhythms. African roots*. DanceAfrica 2015 also pays tribute to its beloved founder **Charles "Chuck" Davis**, who steps down as artistic director after this year's festival.

About half of the 200 million Brazilians can trace some part of their ancestry to Africa. Balé Folclórico da Bahia reflects that heritage. The 32-member ensemble of dancers, musicians, and singers performs repertory based on Bahian (a northern state) folkloric dances of African origin and includes slave dances, capoeira (a form of martial arts), samba, and those that celebrate Carnival. The company is known for its high-energy dance which often rouses the audience to their feet and dance in the aisles. In addition, **Bambara Drum and Dance Ensemble** from the Bronx and Brooklyn's **BAM/Restoration DanceAfrica Ensemble** return to the festival this year.

This is the last year that DanceAfrica will be led by its founding artistic director Chuck Davis. Starting in 1977 with his own company and an “African Village” in the BAM Lepercq Space, Davis directed the festival continuously for almost four decades and nurtured it to become BAM’s longest-running and one of its most popular programs, with indoor and outdoor performances, a bazaar, films, visual arts, educational events, and community components. More than 80 companies from the Ivory Coast, Congo, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zaire, Benin, Uganda, Ghana, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, Peru, Zambia, Madagascar, Brazil, and all across the US have participated in the festival over the years, demonstrating the wide range of African and African diasporan dances. “After 38 years, I’m happily moving aside to allow for fresh new ideas from my ‘Danceson’ Brother Abdel Salaam,” said Davis. **Abdel R. Salaam** assumes the title of artistic director for DanceAfrica 2016. Davis will continue to be involved as Artistic Director Emeritus. The DanceAfrica community pays tribute to its beloved “Baba Chuck” at the performance on May 25.

On Saturday, May 16, the students from Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration will also present a special tribute to Davis, who singlehandedly shaped their African dance program. The tribute will be held at Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Plaza (1368 Fulton St, Brooklyn) at 1pm.

A Tribute to the Ancestors ceremony will be held at 10am on May 16 at the Weeksville Heritage Center (1698 Bergen St, Brooklyn). This traditional ceremony, which includes dancing and music by participating artists, is an integral part of DanceAfrica that honors elders who have passed on. The event is free and open to the public.

The Memorial Day weekend celebration also includes the popular DanceAfrica outdoor Bazaar which hosts more than 150 vendors selling crafts, food, and fashion; *FilmAfrica*, a BAMcinématek film series at BAM Rose Cinemas; master classes for families and adults; and a Late Night Dance Party at BAMcafé.

The 2015 recipients of the Samuel H. Scripps BAM Scholarship for post-secondary education will be presented with their awards on the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House stage on May 22. Inspired by the spirit of DanceAfrica, BAM Trustee Richard Feldman launched the Samuel H. Scripps BAM Scholarship Fund in 2008, in memory of former BAM Trustee and arts patron Samuel Scripps. The scholarship exclusively benefits students who have participated in BAM’s arts education programs, including the DanceAfrica Education initiative.

For press information, contact David Hsieh at dhsieh@BAM.org or 718.636.4129 x9.

About the Artists

Balé Folclórico da Bahia (BFB), the only professional folk dance company in Brazil, was formed in 1988 by Walson Botelho and Ninho Reis and is now led by artistic director José Carlos Arandiba. The 32-member troupe of dancers, musicians, and singers, based in Salvador in the northern state of Bahia, performs a repertory originated from Bahian folkloric dances of African origin and includes slave dances, capoeira (a form of martial arts), samba, and those that celebrate Carnival. The company highlights the region’s culture within a contemporary theatrical vision. BFB made its European debut in 1992 when it participated in Berlin’s Alexander Platz International Festival and drew an audience of 50,000. Its US debut tour was in 1995—96. Since then it has performed in 88 US cities, earning rave reviews and playing to sold-out houses.

Based in New York City, the **Bambara Drum and Dance Ensemble** was founded in 2002 by Joseph Barnes. Comprising 10 dancers and nine drummers, the company is dedicated to preserving, through dance and music, the black aesthetic from its beginnings in Africa to the present day and beyond. The ensemble has performed at Newark Symphony Hall, Aaron Davis Hall, Hostos Center for the Performing Arts, on *The Tyra Banks Show* and in various New York City public school arts education programs throughout East Harlem.

An annual favorite and symbol of youth involvement in the preservation of African heritage, the **BAM/Restoration DanceAfrica Ensemble** returns to BAM for the 19th year. Under the mentorship of Chuck Davis, the gifted young dancers of Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation celebrate both ancestral roots and present-day community. *The Village Voice* has praised these young dancers as “exuberant and disciplined” and “a group worth following.”

Dr. Charles “Chuck” Davis, artistic director and founding elder of DanceAfrica (established at BAM in 1977), is one of the most sought-after teachers and choreographers of traditional African dance in America. He has traveled extensively to Africa to study with leading artists. Davis founded the Chuck Davis Dance Company in New York in 1968 and the African American Dance Ensemble in Durham, NC, in 1983. He has been a panelist for several programs of the National Endowment for the Arts and is a recipient of the AARP Certificate of Excellence, the North Carolina Dance Alliance Award, the 1990 North Carolina Artist Award, and the North Carolina Order of the Long Leaf Pine. He served on the board of the North Carolina Arts Council in 1991 and 2004. In 1992 he received the North Carolina Award in Fine Arts, the state’s highest honor. In 1996, Davis and the African American Dance Ensemble were awarded a \$100,000 grant from the National Dance Residency Program, a three-year initiative launched in 1994 by the New York Foundation for the Arts and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. In 1998 he received an honorary doctorate from Medgar Evers College. Chuck Davis received a Dance Magazine Award in 2004. He and DanceAfrica were cited as one of “America’s Irreplaceable Dance Treasures: The First 100” by the Dance Heritage Coalition. He was honored with a Bessie award for outstanding service to the field of dance in 2014 and the American Dance Festival 2015 is dedicated to him.

Abdel R. Salaam is the executive artistic director/co-founder and choreographer of Forces of Nature Dance Theatre (FONDT), established in 1981. He and his company led the historic procession for Nelson and Winnie Mandela on their visit to New York in 1990. He has directed and choreographed for theater and television to critical acclaim and has been active in the world of the performing and visual arts since 1955. Salaam has served on the faculties of Lehman College, the American Dance Festival in the United States and Korea, Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, and the Chuck Davis Dance Academy. He is currently one of the directors of the Harlem Children's Zone/Forces of Nature Youth Academy of Dance and Wellness at St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Harlem. Some of the awards Salaam has received include: the Monarch Merit Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance from the National Council for Arts & Culture (1993); the Silver Anniversary Award for Outstanding Achievement in Choreography, Teaching and Performance from Lehman College (1994); and Better Family Life Lifetime Achievement Award in Arts (2000). Salaam is a 2004 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow and was selected as artist in residence of Tennessee Performing Art Center from 2003 to 2007. FONDT, along with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, received the 41st annual Audelco Award for Excellence in Black Theater Award as the 2013 Dance Company of the Year.

DanceAfrica outdoor Bazaar

Each year, the free outdoor Bazaar delights the large crowds with local and international vendors who transform the streets surrounding BAM into a marketplace of African, Caribbean, and African American food, fashion, artifacts, jewelry, and crafts. An estimated 40,000 people from all five boroughs of New York and the tri-state area sample these delights and bask in the communal atmosphere throughout the weekend. The *Village Voice* declared it "the boldest party in town" and *The New York Times* called it "a colorful kickoff for the summer street festival season." The bazaar also features entertainment for families.

The bazaar takes place on May 23 from 12–10pm, and on May 24 & 25 from 12–8pm on Ashland Place between Hanson Place & Fulton Street. Admission is free and hours are subject to change.

Late Night Dance Party

May 23 at 10pm

JUMP N FUNK with DJ Rich Medina

BAMcafé (30 Lafayette Ave, Brooklyn)

JUMP N FUNK is North America's original Afrobeat party. It was originated by DJ Rich Medina and dedicated to the late Nigerian icon Fela Anikulapo Kuti. Medina's aim is to raise global awareness for the genre while also driving home the party spirit. The event is free.

DanceAfrica Workshops

Nildinha Fonseca of Balé Folclórico da Bahia leads two dance workshops at Mark Morris Dance Center (3 Lafayette Ave). A family workshop for children and adults will be held on Monday, May 25, from 10–11:15am, followed by an adult workshop from 12–1:30pm for those with intermediate to advanced dance experience. Family workshop fees are \$10 for adults, \$5 for ages 15 and under, and the adult workshop fee is \$12. These classes are co-presented by BAM and MMDG. Visit mmdg.org/school or call 718-624-8400 for details. Pre-registration is recommended.

FilmAfrica at BAMcinématek

This year's cinematic companion to the 38th annual DanceAfrica festival, in association with the New York African Film Festival, features films from Egypt, Cameroon, Tunisia, Kenya, France, South Africa, and Mauritania, with a special focus on Brazil.

***Shield and Spear* (2015) 89min**

Directed by Petter Ringbom.

Documentarian Ringbom (*The Russian Winter*) captures the changing political climate of South Africa 20 years into democracy, observing it through the eyes of politically committed artists, musicians, and designers like photographer Zanele Muholi and mixed-media artist Brett Murray. *Digital.*

May 22 at 7pm / Q&A with Petter Ringbom

Shorts Program 96min

Featuring ***Beleh*** (2013) *Directed by Eka Christa Assam.* In a small village in Cameroon, a woman struggles with a difficult pregnancy and a petulant husband, until a sudden reversal in gender roles gives her the upper hand. *In Pidgin with English subtitles.*

Wooden Hand (2013) Directed by Kaouther Ben Hania. A young girl misses her first day at Koranic school when she attaches her hand to a chair with superglue. In *Tunisian with English subtitles*.

Soko Sonko (2014) Directed by Ekwa Msangi. A hilarious portrait of a father taking his daughter to get her hair braided before school starts. In *Kiswahili and Sheng with English subtitles*.

Curse of an Addict (2013) Directed by Lovinsa Kavuma. This harrowing documentary follows a heroin addict's road to recovery. In *Swahili with English subtitles. Digital*.

May 22 at 9:30pm

Timbuktu (2014) 97min

Directed by Abderrahmane Sissako.

Not far from Timbuktu, Kidane and his family live peacefully in the dunes, seemingly beyond the control of Islamic extremists. But their destiny changes when Kidane accidentally kills a local fisherman and finds himself subject to the radical jihadists' brutal laws. Nominated for an Oscar for Best Foreign Film, this "rich evocation of daily life...feels at once timely and permanent, immediate and essential" (*The New York Times*). DCP. In *Arabic, Bambara, French, Songhay, and Tamashek with English subtitles*.

May 23 at 2, 6:45pm

BAMkids movie matinee:

Kirikou and the Sorceress (1998) 71min

Directed by Michel Ocelot

This enchanting animated feature—based on West African folk tales—follows the adventures of a precocious newborn boy named Kirikou as he sets out to save his village from an evil sorceress. Featuring gorgeous, hand-drawn animation and vibrant music by Senegalese great Youssou NDOUR, *Kirikou and the Sorceress* is a feast of sensory delights.

May 24 at 2pm

Housemaids (2012) 76min

Directed by Gabriel Mascaro.

In this engrossing documentary, seven Brazilian teenagers chronicle the daily routines of their families' housemaids, capturing moments that range from the mundane to the profound, the humorous to the tragic. Through these intimate portraits of the relationships between housemaids and the families that employ them, Mascaro explores Brazil's complex history of race and class. DCP. In *Portuguese with English subtitles*.

May 23 at 4:30, 9pm

Black Orpheus (1959) 100min

Directed by Marcel Camus.

"Feverish with hip-swiveling hustle, exploding local color, and sleeve-worn heart" (*the Village Voice*), this landmark film transports the Greek legend of Orpheus and Eurydice to Rio de Janeiro during Carnival. With a legendary samba and bossa nova score with Luiz Bonfá and Antonio Carlos Jobim, *Black Orpheus* won the 1960 Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. 35mm. In *Portuguese with English subtitles*.

May 24 at 4, 6:30, 9pm

August Winds (2014) 77min

Directed by Gabriel Mascaro.

In a small seaside village, Shirley cares for her ailing grandmother and works on a coconut farm while longing to become a tattoo artist. She passes her time with her boyfriend, who works as a

diver off the coast of their village. When a human skull is discovered, the duo embark on a quest to identify the remains while confronting their own ideas about love, life, and destiny. *DCP. In Portuguese with English subtitles.*

May 25 at 2, 6:30pm

Winter of Discontent (2012) 96min

Directed by Ibrahim El Batout.

Set against the Tahrir Square protests in 2011, this starkly moving film journeys into the lives of an activist, a journalist, and a state security officer in the nights leading up to President Mubarak's resignation. Poetically evoking the pivotal events that altered the course of Egyptian history forever, *Winter of Discontent* offers "a fascinating insight into state oppression" (*The Guardian*). *Digital. In Arabic with English and French subtitles.*

May 25 at 4, 8:45pm

FilmAfrica press contact: Lisa Thomas, lthomas@BAM.org or 718.724.8023.

BAM Rose Cinemas (30 Lafayette Ave)

Tickets: \$13 per screening for adults; \$10 for seniors 65 and over and children under 12; \$10 for students under 25 with valid ID (Monday–Thursday, except holidays); \$8 BAM Cinema Club Members
Tickets available by phone at 718.777.FILM or by visiting BAM.org

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). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. 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. BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, offers a dinner menu prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances. BAMcafé also features an eclectic mix of live music for BAMcafé Live on Friday and Saturday nights with a bar menu available starting at 6pm.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater)
D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue
Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM
Car: Commercial parking lots are located adjacent to BAM

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

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