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THE INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN ARTS FESTIVAL, NYC'S LONGEST-RUNNING CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN CULTURE, RETURNS TO BROOKLYN: JULY 1 – 4, 2022

Headlining World Music And Popular Artists: **Thandiswa, Olatunji, Oshun, The Jazz of A Tribe Called Quest** featuring **Dashill Smith** and **Malcolm-Jamal Warner, Lyfe Jennings, and Others!**

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Brooklyn, New York – **International African Arts Festival, Inc.** announced the return of New York City's longest running and most respected celebration of worldwide African music, dance, and culture. The International African Arts Festival (IAAFestival), founded in 1971, will take place at **Commodore Barry Park** in Brooklyn from **Friday, July 1 to Monday, July 4, 2022**, rain or shine (10:00 am to 9:00 pm).

Thandiswa, the popular double platinum South African musician is headlining this year's Festival, along with Trinidadian AfroSoca artist **Olatunji**; **The Jazz of a Tribe Called Quest** featuring **Dashill Smith** and **Malcolm-Jamal Warner**; R&B sensation **Lyfe Jennings**; and **Oshun**. Other headliners are saxophonist **Mike Phillips**, dancers from the legendary **Maimouna Keita School of African Dance** (MKSAD), and **ADH**. Other performers include the groups **Alura, Taifa Bartz, Nubian Messengers, PitsiRa, The Shaka Tonge Experience**, and others.

Thandiswa, Olatunji, ADH, and MKSAD will also perform at **LIBATION**, the kick-off performance for the Festival. **LIBATION** is Saturday, June 4, 2022 (5:00 pm to 10:00 pm) at NYC College of Technology (300 Jay Street, downtown Brooklyn). Details and admission <https://bit.ly/libation2022>.

RAPID VIP ENTRY A successful component of The Festival returns this summer: **Rapid VIP Entry**. Supporters are encouraged to enjoy The Festival, with great ease, by investing in these special admission options: **\$15 Single-Day Pass** | **\$60 Four-Day Pass** | **\$125 Friend of the Festival Pass** (this premium is available per day and includes VIP entrance, VIP seating for 9 hours of performances and presentations, premium VIP gift bags, and

- more -



unlimited refreshments). The advance Rapid VIP Entry passes are available online at <https://bit.ly/iaafestival2022rapid>. The walk-up suggested donation is \$5 for adults 18 and older and \$2 for children 12 and older.

WORLD FAMOUS AFRICAN MARKETPLACE Since 1971, The Festival has attracted some of the most memorable African and African Diaspora artisans and vendors from around the world. Its African marketplace is the backbone of The Festival and every year it contributes to the economic vitality of Brooklyn and the boroughs' small Black business owners. This year, the International African Arts Festival will welcome 200+ artisans and vendors to Commodore Barry Park.

The 2022 THEME and ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS The theme for this year's gathering is *Eddembe* which means freedom. *Eddembe* is taken from the Luganda language of the Buganda People in Uganda.

The Festival represents the best in family-friendly programming. And everyone is welcome to experience African excellence in a variety of expressions—from music, art, fashion to food, children's face-painting, massages and much more. Key highlights include:

- Daily Children and Youth Programming
- The Youth Talent Search
- Chess Tournament, and the
- Community Parade

The intellectual component of IAAFestival is the annual **Symposium on Culture, Community, and Struggle** (since 1989). It's co-presented with the NY Chapter of the **National Association of Kawaida Organizations (NAKO)**. Featured scholars, artists, and community leaders will be announced soon.

The Festival is also an open, non-judgmental space for believers and non-believers to fellowship with one another. Attendees can experience the annual Akan ceremony (hosted by Akan spiritual practitioners) and can also pay homage to their ancestors at the African Ancestors Shrine.

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ABOUT US What we now know as the International African Arts Festival or The Festival, began in 1971 as the African Street Carnival. In the United States, it is the original multiple-day festival dedicated to celebrating native and global African culture. It started as a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) block party on Claver Place in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The party doubled as a fundraiser for *Uhuru Sasa Shule* (“Freedom Now School”), an independent Nguzo Saba-guided, African-centered school run by concerned parents and community members at the height of the Black Arts and Black Power movements. In the 1970s Bed-Stuy’s *Uhuru Sasa Shule* and its sister organization, The East, were world-class independent Black institutions that attracted some of the most iconic figures of the movement to their headquarters on Claver Place. Local entertainers, arts and crafts vendors, along with parents who prepared food were among the initial 2,000 people who made the block party a phenomenal success. The African Street Carnival would later become known as the African Street Festival. In 1996, for its 25th anniversary year, the organization changed its name to the International African Arts Festival to better reflect its scope and reach.

51 years later, IAAFestival is a permanent fixture in the cultural landscape of New York. It attracts an estimated 75,000 attendees for the annual in-person event in July and another several thousand for its year-round streaming events and community in-person public programs.

IAAFESTIVAL ALUMNI PERFORMERS (AT-A-GLANCE) The Festival’s family-friendly programming truly reflects an embrace of Pan-African culture. Most music and poetry genres representing the culture has been highlighted on the three stages at The Festival. From African American Classical Music (known as Jazz), Spoken Word, Reggae, and Gospel to R&B, Soca, Calypso, Afrobeat, Gullah-Geechee music, and more, The Festival has highlighted it all. Headliners and presenters who has blessed stages at Festival include **Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, Hugh Masekela, Third World, The Mighty Sparrow, KRS-One, The Last Poets, Ms. Lauryn Hill, India Arie,**

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Erykah Badu, Abbey Lincoln, Hezekiah Walker and the Love Fellowship Crusade Choir, Blue Magic, Eddie Palmeri, Randy Weston, Chief Bey, Talib Kweli, Yasiin Bey (formerly Mos Def), Blitz the Ambassador, Ravi Coltrane, Roy Hargrove, Iyanla Vanzant, Wunmi, Doug E. Fresh, Herbie Hancock, Mtume, Pharoah Sanders, Sun Ra, Roy Ayers, Living Colour, Denroy Morgan, Fred Wesley and the New JBs, Norman Connors, Tito Puente Jr., Jessica Care Moore, Sonia Sanchez, Nana Camille Yarbrough, Angela Winbush, Somi, Eric Roberson, and countless other revered artists.

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IAAFESTIVAL SPONSORS The International African Arts Festival is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Primarily, it is supported by artists, vendors, and volunteers from New York, all parts of the United States, and globally. It is also supported by community-based organizations, sponsors, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the New York City Council; the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) with the support of Governor Kathy Hogul; and former New York City Council Members Inez Barron, Mathieu Eugene, Laurie A. Cumbo (now Commissioner of New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and Mayor of the City of New York (former Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams).

CONTACT INFORMATION +

- Website: www.IAAFestival.org
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- Park directions: www.nycgovparks.org/parks/commodorebarrypark.

Artists are available for interviews before and during the Festival. Requests are directed to Thysha Shabazz thysha@akilaworksongs.com and Lea Byrd lea@akilaworksongs.com at AKILA WORKSONGS. Call (718) 756-8501 (office) or DM [@akilaworksongs](https://www.instagram.com/akilaworksongs).

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