

DAILY NEWS

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Afro Mosaic Soul dance troupe will perform in "African Dance Brooklyn Style/Brooklyn Style" at the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts.

Taking steps to showcasing boro's black cultural riches

BY ELIZABETH LAZAROWITZ
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HIP-HOP moguls, dance legends, literary giants and jazz greats.

Brooklyn's rich African heritage has helped spawn them all, and that hefty contribution to the arts will get an in-depth look in a sweeping, year-long program led by the Brooklyn Arts Council.

Through a string of performances, panels and workshops, Black Brooklyn Renaissance aims to highlight the borough's role as a major center of black arts and culture since the 1960s, said Kay Turner, the Brooklyn Arts Council's folk arts director and the main force behind the project.

"The public at large is unaware of the de-

gree to which there has been a tremendous amount of artistic production in the black community of Brooklyn," Turner said. "One of the main goals is to celebrate the breadth and depth of that."

The series will kick off this Sunday with "African Dance/Brooklyn Style," a free dance performance at the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts that looks at the way African dance styles are being preserved and reinterpreted in Brooklyn today.

More traditional groups, such as the Caribbean stiltwalking troupe the Brooklyn Jumbies, will share the stage with modern dancers such as Baraka du Soleil, who brings Haitian influences to contemporary choreography.

"To be able to see the reflections of the African diaspora in a panoramic way on stage — it's a rare thing," du Soleil said.

The program will celebrate icons such as jazz pianist Randy Weston, and also look at how up-and-coming borough artists are putting their own spin on forms like hip hop.

The size, scope and diversity of the black arts movement in Brooklyn means that its broader impact sometimes gets overlooked — something that the program aims to change, said Lisa Yancey, an arts consultant at Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corp., the program's co-sponsor.

"It hasn't gotten its due historically on this scale," Yancey said. "It allows some credibility to come to the borough that is really nurturing and cultivating creativity."

For more information, visit brooklynartscouncil.org/blackbrooklynrenaissance. elazarowitz@nydailynews.com