

# CULTUREBOT

ARTS + CULTURE + IDEAS



On June 5th, the Brooklyn Public Library at Grand Army Plaza will host the [Black Brooklyn Drum Call](#), which opens the summer season of the yearlong initiative [Black Brooklyn Renaissance](#). BLACK BROOKLYN RENAISSANCE is a holistic look at Black culture and arts in Brooklyn over the past five decades. The project explores the ways in which Black artists retain ties to mid-century social and political movements, and preserve traditions across generations. Joining together local cultural institutions and organizations across Brooklyn, BBR's goal is to educate a new generation of artists and audiences about Brooklyn's Black artistic legacies by encouraging attendance at a wide array of BAC curated and sponsored programs.

Brooklyn Arts Council has joined forces with artists and organizations across the borough of Brooklyn to make Black Brooklyn Renaissance a truly collaborative endeavor. Brooklyn has evolved as a major Black cultural center in the United States, largely as a

result of the diversity of Black cultures here—African American, Afro-Caribbean, and African—all with distinct arts traditions interacting and expanding in the urban uhuru (freedom) of Brooklyn. Here the historic Black struggle for social justice met the making of art in powerful ways. That legacy continues today without an end in sight.

The Black Brooklyn Drum Call is a free event gathering together Brooklyn musicians practicing the art of drumming from many African, Afro-Caribbean, African American and Hispanic diasporic communities including Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Puerto Rico. The artists will take over Grand Army Plaza, performing and uniting ten distinct styles of drumming, demonstrating the role drums have played in the history of various cultures as well as the complexity of African drumming practiced in the borough. The event includes drumming demos and drum-making workshops, and is followed by a symposium on the history of African drumming in Brooklyn moderated by Neil Clarke (who has played with Harry Belafonte and Miriam Mekeba, among many others). Typically a means of announcement or a call to action in many African cultures, this Drum Call signifies the commencement of a summer series of Brooklyn festivals celebrating African diaspora, such as the West Indian American Labor Day Carnival. Intended to be an interactive community event, the public are encouraged to bring their drums!

Demonstrations, performances and symposium on African beats in the borough featuring expert Brooklyn drummers representing various African diasporic traditions, including **José Ortiz** (Puerto Rican), [Frisner Augustin](#) (Haitian), **Baba Mpho** (Guyanese Shanto tradition), **Tony Reece** (Carnival iron section), [Junior Wedderburn](#) (Jamaican) and others. Learn about the drum-making art from **Montague Pollard**.

**The public is invited to bring drums** and learn the distinctive beats of Black Brooklyn, then join in the All-Brooklyn Drum Jam. Immediately following the jam, join us for a symposium on the history of African drumming traditions in Brooklyn moderated by world-renowned Brooklyn drummer [Neil Clarke](#).

**Free!**

*Presented by BAC in cooperation with Brooklyn Public Library.*

**WHEN:** Saturday, June 5, 2–5:30pm

**2–3:30pm:** Drum demonstrations/performances on the Plaza; drum-making demo in the 2nd floor meeting room

**3:30pm:** All-Brooklyn Drum Jam on the Plaza

**4–5:30pm:** Symposium: History of African Drumming in Brooklyn.

**WHERE:** *Brooklyn Public Library, Central Branch Plaza and Dweck Auditorium (Rain Site: Dweck, 2nd fl. meeting room)*

Grand Army Plaza at Flatbush and Eastern Pkwy (Prospect Heights)

Filed under: [Event](#), [Music](#)