

GUYANA FOLK

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CELEBRATING GUYANA'S 45TH REPUBLIC ANNIVERSARY

ONE PEOPLE ONE CULTURE ONE CELEBRATION



MASH RA MANI

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**Lear Matthews -
February Editor**

Cover Design - Claire Goring

Copy Editors-

Edgar Henry & Lear Matthews

Layout and Design by

Claire A. Goring & Ashton Franklin

Contributors:

Lear Matthews, Dhanpaul Narine,

Edgar Henry, I.C. Fraser,

Claire Patterson-Monah

Dennis Scott Chabrol

Hubert George Derry Etkins

Photographs

Demerara Waves, GT Vibes

Dr. Frank Anthony

Francis Farrier

Vibert Cambridge

GCA Media Team

Ave Brewster-Haynes (Chairperson),

Juliet Emanuel, Edgar Henry,

Lear Matthews, Claire A. Goring,

Gail Nunes, Ashton Franklin,

Margaret Lawrence,

Francis Quamina Farrier.

Please join our Facebook group,

Website: www.guyfolkfest.org

GCA Secretariat

1368 E.89 Street, Suite 2

Brooklyn, NY 11236

Tel: 718 209 5207

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This is an opportune time to reference what has been called “the immigrant’s dream”. A dream characterized by a sojourn back to the home country, basking in sunshine, after exchanging layers of winter garment for beachwear and other tropical gear, celebrating MASH Guyanese style or T & T Carnival - Far away from the frigid, almost unbearable weather in the northeastern US. Wake up dear readers! Unfortunately, it’s only a dream, but do not despair, no worries - this too shall pass.

We trust that you and your family are safe, making the best of it in the home country or adopted home in the Diaspora" As the late Maya Angelou stated: “You can never go home again, but the truth is, you never really leave home, so it’s alright. And yet it is innate in human nature to try to go home again, and it may in fact be what life is all about: getting back home, back to death and then out of death and back to life”.

The Guyana Cultural Association continues in its efforts to keep you informed, entertained and connected to “home” through the Arts, heritage stories, cultural events, social commentary, history and the legacy of our heroes, as well as ordinary folk. GCA embodies a spirit of commitment to cultural resuscitation. We wish to take you home again – Reaching back while we move forward through generations to come. In keeping with the theme of sustaining cultural links, collaboration and cooperation, with input from all segments of the society including the Diaspora, the GCA executive Board decided to maintain the slogan We Bridgin’ for 2015 through 2016 to the 50th anniversary of Guyana’s independence. This reflects the goal of building of relationships that are productive and not adversarial at this critical period in the nation’s history.

The theme for February’s issue of the Magazine is MASHRAMANI, celebrating the fruits of our collective efforts and accomplishments through hard work. Once again, the talents of costume designers and revelers were on display, symbolically representing various aspects of indigenous culture. Our sincerest condolences to the families of the children and teacher who tragically died in an auto accident while returning from a Children’s MASH event.

We must acknowledge the upcoming national and regional elections in Guyana scheduled for May 11th. It is the hope that this historic milestone will result in opportunities to come together over shared cultural values and objectives in respectful, productive dialogue and action for change, without getting side-tracked by what divides the nation.

In celebration of Black History Month, we report on an exhibition by Victor Davson and Martin Smith’s review of Blacks during the Holocaust; profiles of Drs. Brian Seymour and Keith Wilson; Valerie Coddett’s Art Collection; and the Guyana Museum of African Art. The works of award-winning educator, Paloma Mohamed and John Wilson exemplify the important contributions of Guyanese artists. Vibert Cambridge introduces the music of Fauzya Moore, highlighting a fascinating compilation of Guyanese heritage renditions" We also celebrate the accomplishments of our own Claire Patterson-Monah, while Francis Farrier offers “Nights of the Stars”. Carlyle Harry reflects on GCA’s work and legacy, and a young writer suggests appropriate response to cultural biases and stereotyping in the workplace. We hope that you enjoy these and the other presentations as we look forward to a productive and culturally enriched 2015. Walk Good!

Lear Matthews, February Editor



YOUTH CELEBRATION



*PHOTOGRAPHS
Demerara Waves, GT Vibes
Dr. Frank Anthony*



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Dr. Frank Anthony*



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Dr. Frank Anthony



*PHOTOGRAPHS
Demerara Waves, GT Vibes
Dr. Frank Anthony*





*PHOTOGRAPHS
Demerara Waves, GT Vibes
Dr. Frank Anthony*



*PHOTOGRAPHS
Demerara Waves, GT Vibes
Dr. Frank Anthony*

Both the National Cultural Centre on Mandela and Homestretch Avenues and the Theatre Guild Playhouse on Parade Street in Georgetown, were recently the venues for productions entitled, "Night of the Stars". Both events were occasions when our stage stars and other cultural workers, were honored for performances which the judges thought were better than the efforts of their colleagues.

The stars which were presented with trophies and impressive cheques (checks) at the National Cultural Centre, were those who performed at the Annual National Drama Festival, 2014. There were many categories, including Best Actor and Best Actress. What is of note with the majority of the plays which were staged, not only at the 2014 National Drama Festival, but also in more recent

years at various venues, was the similarity of the themes. Most of the plays dealt with domestic violence. Also of note, was the fact that, unlike the National Drama Festivals of the 1960s, the 1970s, and the 1980s, there was the virtual absence of older performers. The majority of the performers in last year's National Drama Festival, were under 30 years of age. For whatever reason, older actors and actresses are no longer seen in presentations at the National Drama Festivals, as used to be the case in the earlier years of that national event. Back in those early years, Winners received only a trophy and the admiration and respect of their colleagues and the Public. Last year's Drama Festival Winners, together received a total of \$4.3Million, which was quite a dramatic increase from \$0, back in the, "For the Love of it", years of participating in those National Drama Festivals.

Night of the Stars

NATIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE

Francis Quamina Farrier



A unique aspect of that 2014 National Drama Festival at the National Cultural Centre, "Night of the Stars", was the commencement. It started with the Marching Band of the Enterprise Primary School, Durban Backlands in Georgetown. Entering from the back of the auditorium, and marching along the center aisle, and on to the stage, this small Marching Band of a dozen students, caused quite a stir with the audience. They just loved that up-beat start to what was a very entertaining evening of a "Night of the Stars".



Eze Rockliffe and Hector Stoute, who were the recipients of Special Awards. Awards were also handed out to those behind-the-scenes 'stars' such as the Directors, some of the technical operatives. Of note was the special Award to the Caretaker of the Playhouse. A posthumous award was presented to the daughter of the late Rosamund Addo, who passed away last year, after over half a century of contributions to Drama, Music and Poetry.

Both "Night of the Stars" at the National Cultural



Night of the Stars

THEATRE GUILD PLAY HOUSE

Francis Quamina Farrier

The "Night of the Stars" at the Theatre Guild Playhouse, was somewhat different than what it was at the National Cultural Centre. There was more of a "Red Carpet, Hollywood Oscar Night" setting, than was the case over at the National Cultural Centre. Another difference, was the wider age range of those involved. Some veteran performers were also honored. Among them, Dave Martins, Ian McDonald,

Centre and at the Theatre Guild Playhouse, gives the theatre-loving public, much to look forward to during 2015. This year could very well be even more active than last year as our Dramatists and other Cultural workers prepare for Guyana's Fiftieth Independence Anniversary.

My Six Seasons by Fauzya Moore

Vibert C. Cambridge, Ph.D.

The late Charles Knights, L.R.S.M., A.R.C.M. (1927–2014), once stated that four factors are needed for nurturing musical creativity in Guyanese society—adventurous composers, competent performers, knowledgeable critics, and an interested audience (consumers).

I am a member of the last category, with an interest in Guyanese musical life during the 20th century. I try to collect all genres of music composed, arranged, and performed by Guyanese at home and abroad. I am interested in innovations, especially new music influenced by our heritage. Access to the web and gifts from colleagues have kept my collection reasonably up-to-date.

The music composed, arranged, performed, and consumed by Guyanese tells us a great deal about the society's hopes, achievements, frustrations, and aspirations. Music composed by Guyanese at home or in the diaspora has always been a useful barometer on the state of social and cultural interaction and exchange.

During a recent winter day, I spent most of a morning listening to Fauzya Moore's CD, *My Six Seasons*, which was recorded and produced in Ottawa, Canada.

My Six Seasons has international standards, original compositions, and refreshing interpretations of Guyanese folk and art songs.

Three of Fauzya Moore's six seasons are "rainy season," "dry season," and "late dry season." She has illustrated them with selections from Guyana's repertoire of folk and art songs, as well as by composing music inspired by her heritage. "Way Down Demerara" by R. C. G. Potter and her original composition "Rainy Season Come In Fast" represent "rainy season." The integration of boys' choir, subtle pan, and Fauzya's soothing soprano voice evokes the landscape of the floods and swollen rivers that come with the rainy season in coastal Guyana.

She selected three folk songs to represent "dry season"—"Timba Man," "Sityra," and "Janey Gal." "Timba Man" evokes the loneliness and melancholy of the timber grant worker and connects stylistically



GUYANESE MUSIC

My Six Seasons by Fauzya Moore

Vibert C. Cambridge, Ph.D.

with innovations by Ram John Holder and Hilton Hemerding. Fauzya’s version of “Sityra” is offered in a slower than traditional tempo and encourages an empathetic reading that conveys the hurt of lost love in a dry season. Janey Gal is spirited and confident with youthful vivacity.

“Twilight” represents the “late dry season.” Fauzya’s interpretation of this art song captures the color and the tone of this magical moment in the Guyanese day that inspired Cecile Burgan-Nobrega during the 1950s. The rendition is soothing and reminds me of evenings growing up in Cummingsburg—the sound of cicadas and distant trumpets announcing the end of the day in Eve Leary. The other three seasons presented are “spring,” “summer,” and “winter.”

My Six Seasons is more than a debut CD. This well-produced album is a fresh voice demonstrating the capacity of Guyana’s repertoire to support a range of emotional interpretations. Further, for me, it is a valuable contribution to the current conversation about the development of a “Guyanese sound.”

It is connected to ongoing conversations in Facebook groups such as Guyanese Music Lovers Group, New Amsterdam and Guyanese Musical Life, and Caucus on Creativity, about drawing on the nation’s multi-ethnic folk music heritage to revive musical creativity. It is also connected to innovations such as Dave Martin’s slow-tempo rendition of “Sitira” and the fusion evident in “Ow Beta” in his 2012 CD At Home. My Six Seasons is also connected to the muse that encouraged the “masquerade jams” in Guyana during November and December 2014 and the recent compositions—Pork Knockers Symphony by Gordon Burnett and Bandula Flounce by Ray Seales.

This consumer of Guyanese music is satisfied with *My Six Seasons*.

For further information on My Six Seasons, please visit: mysixseasons.webs.com/ and www.cdbaby.com/Artist/FauzyaMoore

IN MEMORY OF

Leonard A. Thomas

Born in the Afro-Cuban district of Oriente, Cuba, Leonard Alfonso Thomas spent his formative years in Jamaica before joining the British Royal Air



Force. “I was destined to leave this island of extraordinary beauty and proud people to horizons of which I knew very little. I turned my back on the land of sun and Calypso, the land of rum.” he wrote in a biographical essay.

As a part of the early wave of Caribbean immigrants in the UK, he wrote about the strained social climate and the injustices of racism. “Five thousand colored men are asking Britain a pertinent question: “Are we British Citizens? opened an essay in 1951 titled “Britain’s Colored Men.” which was submitted to the newspaper, the Sunday Pictorial.

Socially, Leonard loved music and dance. Lena Horne, the Nicholas Brothers, Billy Eckstine, Nat King Cole, Harry Belafonte and Frank Sinatra were among his favorite performers. He enjoyed black and white classic Hollywood films and he loved engaging in conversation about history, travel and literature. Although he had given up writing as a profession, he never lost his passion for reciting poetry and dramatic storytelling about the war, growing up in Jamaica or people he had to “put in their place.” He had many tales about discovery and adventure in his world travels throughout the Caribbean, South America, Africa and Europe. Up until his death he recalled dates, scenarios, events and poetic passages with riveting accuracy.

A long standing member of St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, he was also devoted to his faith, and often shared examples of his many blessings based on his intimate relationship with God.

Leonard Thomas was the husband of GCA Summer Heritage Camp supporter Audrey Thomas.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

GUYANA MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART AND ETHNOLOGY

The Museum of African Art and Ethnology was founded in the year 1985 with the purchase of the collections of African Art of Mr. Hubert H Nicholson and Mrs. Desiree Malik. These collections were annotated and accessioned through UNESCO by Dr. William Seligman Curator of African and Oceanic Art, Brooklyn Museum was declared open in 1992. Since then donations from the local community have continued to include art and craft brought from the African Community here in Guyana. The Museum has collected pieces from the Burrowes School of Art and other day-to-day artifacts from the local community.

In 2001, the Museum was renamed the Museum of African Heritage in order to open their doors to a wider audience and begin to fully address the African experience in Guyana. This new mandate or Mission Statement will allow the Museum to explore research and solicit donations from the whole community which would benefit, as well as provide a program that would educate visitors to the activities.

The African Museum of Heritage is the first of its kind in the Caribbean.



GUYANA
AFRICAN MUSEUM
OF HERITAGE
THE FIRST OF ITS KIND
IN THE CARIBBEAN

14 The Holocaust's forgotten black victims

Martin Smith | 23 April 2014

Most people know about the Nazi Holocaust, the murder of 6 million Jews and 6 million others: Russians, Gypsies, Slavs, socialists, disabled people and LGBT people.

Alongside the big narrative of the Holocaust there are a myriad of small, individual stories and testimonies that help illustrate and shed light on the cruelty and barbarity of the Nazi regime.

One such account is the story of what happened to Germany's tiny black population.

Primo Levi once wrote, *"this is a story interwoven with freezing dawns"*. Some may know their story, I certainly didn't.

Tucked away inside Hitler's anti-Semitic diatribe, Mein Kampf, there is the following passage:

It was, and is, the Jew who brought negroes to the Rhine, brought them with the same aim and with deliberate intent to destroy the white race he hates by persistent bastardisation, to hurl it from the cultural and political heights it has attained, and to ascend them as its masters.

This was not entirely a figment of his imagination; there were a small number of young black children of African heritage living in the Rhineland.

Like most west European countries, by the 17th century, Germany had a small black population. The modern state of Germany was founded in 1871.

The number of black people living in Germany increased from 1870 onwards. They came mainly from Germany's small colonies in Africa and south east Asia; they were students, artisans, entertainers, former soldiers, low-level colonial officials, such as tax collectors, who had worked for the imperial colonial government.

Black population

The black population of Germany at the time of the Third Reich was 20,000 – 25,000 out of a total population of over 65 million.

Even before the Nazis took power in 1933,

BLACK
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2 MONTH

15



Germany's black population faced racial discrimination and violence. Most government, religious and colonial officials refused to register interracial marriages or births. The

state promoted eugenics, and popularised arguments about the inferiority of dual-heritage children.

Following the defeat of Germany in the First World War, the Allies stripped Germany of its colonies. Also as part of the war reparations (under the Versailles Treaty) the Allies occupied the Rhineland in western Germany.

Firpo Carr in Germany's Black Holocaust: 1890-1945, estimates that over 200,000 French troops occupied the Rhineland region. They included a number black colonial troops. Some of these African Rhineland-based soldiers married German women and raised their children as German; other German women had children by African soldiers outside of marriage.

Estimates vary, but there were over 800 dual-heritage children living in the Rhineland region. The Nazis and some sections of the press labeled these children "Rhineland Bastards" or "Rhineland Mischlingers" (mixing their blood with "alien" races).

The term "Rhineland Bastard" is of course vile. It both articulated the Nazis' biological construction of race and colonial conceptions of race and racial mixture that were seen as posing a threat to "white" superiority.

The isolation, segregation and attempted eradication of Germany's black population was carried out in stages. This mirrors (obviously on a tiny scale) the methods used by the Nazis in their attempts to wipe out Europe's Jewish population.

Some of these children and their families fled Germany after the Nazis took power; others were killed in the round-ups that followed.

The Nazis enacted a new law providing a basis for forced sterilisation of disabled people, Gypsies, and blacks on the 14 July 1933. If you want to read further about this horrific practice go to Benno Muellar-Hill's *Murderous Science: Elimination by Scientific Selection of Jews, Gypsies, and Others in Germany, 1933-1945*.

Under the Nazis, African-German mixed-heritage children were marginalised, isolated socially and economically, and not allowed to attend university. Racial discrimination prohibited them from seeking most jobs.

Then followed the Nuremberg laws of September 1935. These prohibited miscegenation – mixed marriages between Aryans and others. Any young Afro-German woman who got pregnant was forced to have an abortion.

Commission Number 3

An organisation named "Commission Number 3" was created by the Nazis to deal with the so-called problem of the "Rhineland Bastards". This was organised under Dr Eugen Fischer of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics. It was decided that the African-German children would be sterilised under the 1933 Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring.

The programme began in 1937, when local officials were asked to report on all "Rhineland Bastards" under their jurisdiction.

All together, some 400 children of mixed parentage were arrested and sterilised. The Nazis went to great lengths to conceal their sterilisation and abortion programme.

What happened to these Afro-Germans is very complex – their experiences were not uniform. Some of these children were subjected to medical experiments and others mysteriously "disappeared".

Hans Hauck, a black Holocaust survivor and a victim of Hitler's mandatory sterilisation programme, explained in the film *Hitler's Forgotten Victims* that when he was forced to undergo sterilisation as a

The Holocaust's forgotten black victims ...

Like their Jewish counterparts they did not go meekly to their deaths – they resisted the best they could.

"No, you can't have my life; I will fight for it."

teenager, he was given no anaesthetic. Once he received his sterilisation certificate, he was "free to go", so long as he agreed to have no sexual relations whatsoever with Germans.

Tina Campt, in her path-breaking book, *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender, and Memory in the Third Reich*, interviewed several black Rhineland survivors.

She published testimony from one male member of this Rhineland group. In his complex statement he recalls being sterilised under the Nazi programme, then later he became a member of the Hitler Youth movement. He then joined the German army, was captured by the Russians and spent several years as a German prisoner of war in Russia.

Not enough research has been done to unravel what happened to Germany's black population. We know that most – alongside other black Europeans and many black soldiers – ended up in Nazi concentration camps and were murdered.

Like their Jewish counterparts they did not go meekly to their deaths – they resisted the best they could. A tiny handful survived and were able to tell their story.

One such black survivor was Johnny Voste, a Belgian resistance fighter who was arrested in 1942 for alleged sabotage and then shipped to Dachau concentration camp.

He told that one of his jobs was stacking vitamin crates in the camp. Risking his own life, he distributed hundreds of vitamins to camp detainees, which saved the lives of many who were starving and weak. His motto was: "No, you can't have my life; I will fight for it."

“Is that Your Real Hair?”

- Unlocking Stereotypes

Glenna Malindi Matthews

Driving home from a 12-hour shift as a nurse, I often replay the events of the day in my head, mentally reflecting on the things that I have done for my patients and what I have learned. I think about the questions that were asked of me by patients, their families and my co-workers. The questions vary from medical and patient-centered queries to the attempt to satisfy their personal curiosities. For the record, I am a second generation Guyanese-American female, conscious of heritage and social context, and have some background in the Hair Dressing occupation.

“Is that Your Real Hair?”

Glenna Malindi Matthews

Questions or statements are sometimes complimentary, but they can also be patronizing or colored by stereotypical projections. I was asked one such question by a male co-worker of Caucasian descent: “Is that your real hair?” To some, a cogent response may have been a simple “yes” or “no” – perhaps ending the conversation, but I felt that I had to respond more elaborately because the question has been asked of me in public before and I often thought of its origin and implications.

Firm in tone, but with quite the professional demeanor, I said to him: “That is a personal question”, then walked away. However, I felt compelled to take this opportunity to both ventilate and educate. I thought that my co-worker needed to be made aware of the sensitive and loaded nature of his question. I returned to him and inquired if he would ever ask a man who was obviously wearing a toupee whether his hair was real. Appearing baffled and with a chuckle, he said that he would not ask such a question. Obviously he did not grasp the analogy.

Determined to make my point, I then asked if he would ever ask a female, in public, if she has breast implants. Again he chuckled nonchalantly as though I was making a big deal of nothing. I told him that I wanted to make him aware of the implications and possible consequences of, and reactions to his question. I felt that he had made an assumption based on my ethnicity.

Not wishing to appear crass nor as though I was drawing an irrational or baseless conclusion, I proceeded to explain that African American women’s “hair culture” dictates versatility, whether short or lengthy, curly, nappy, kinky, straight, weaved, in locks or “Afro”. I informed him that, should he Google pictures of African women, he would see variations in elaborate braiding styles and the use of color beads. Further, some groups use hairstyles symbolically to send and receive messages of character, season, occasion and events.

By that time my co-worker seemed mesmerized, but listened attentively. I stated that African-American women may wear extensions or wigs due to the frequent color changes. More importantly, hair in the African American culture is a significant form of expression, displaying mood, variety and consciousness. I then asked him if he was aware of the many



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Caucasian and Hispanic women who wear hair extensions. Not surprising, he was not. I further explained that African-American women have such a genetic/cultural mixture that our hair comes in different textures and lengths.

Finally, with a sense of relief, I explained that I was not angry with him, but that he should understand the insinuation his question may evoke. Some may think that my reaction was exaggerated. Indeed my co-worker felt that it was a “harmless” question. However, I strongly believe that there is an inherent danger in such stereotypical behavior, which potentially trickles down through generations, thus perpetuating ignorance, illogic and prejudice. I encourage individuals to examine biases as it relates to being culturally competent on the job. I felt quite accomplished by the end of that day!

CELEBRATING

DR. BRIAN SEYMOUR

DIRECTOR OF NEWLY CREATED
**CENTER FOR THE
PREVENTION OF
HEALTH
DISPARITIES**



Presently, the PI of a pilot study in the Jacksonville community where he is examining the causes for the high morbidity and mortality from allergic asthma in the African American population, Dr. Brian Seymour played a key role in establishing and implementing cutting edge research into the mechanisms of allergic asthma and lung inflammation at the research institute. He was a co-investigator, at the University of California Davis (UCD) where he worked on a 5 year project funded by the Tobacco Related Disease Research Project for the state of California. Here, he designed the first and established several murine models of lung inflammation to study the effect of second hand smoke on allergic asthma.

He was the lead author in 5 peer reviewed articles which included an article in the Journal of Experimental Medicine. These studies were definitive on the harmful effects of secondhand smoke with respect to allergic asthma and the results were partially responsible for the banning of smoking in public places in the state of California.

Dr. Seymour received his Bachelor of Science Degree from Southern Illinois University and a Master of Science in Clinical Science from the Center for Advance Medical Technology at the San Francisco State University. In 1996 he received his PhD in Immunology from the University of California, Davis. He brought to Edward Waters College 17 years of experience in the field of biotech-

nology. Dr. Seymour has authored/coauthored over 24 scientific publications. His notable work in the field of Allergy and Asthma and Immunology has been published in several leading journals including the journals- Science and Nature. His pioneering work on the effects of second-hand smoke on allergy was partly instrumental on legislation that ban smoking in public places in the state of California.

This goal of his present research is to understand the association between vitamin D deficiency and allergic asthma in the African American communities in the Jacksonville area.

Over the last 10 years he has dedicated his efforts in bringing his knowledge and experience to students in the classroom. His passion for the classroom led him to the Sonoma State University in Sonoma California and now to Edward Waters College.

Dr. Seymour is the proud father of two and enjoys physical fitness, travelling and reading. He is currently the Director of the Center for the Prevention of Health Disparities at Edward Waters College.



CONGRATULATIONS

CLAIRE PATTERSON- MONAH

SENIOR ASSOCIATE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
QUEENS HEALTH NETWORK

The Guyana cultural Association would like to congratulate our own Ms. Claire Patterson-Monah on her appointment as the new Senior Associate Executive Director of the Queens Health Network- DSRIP Coordinator-Queens Hub New York State is implementing a transformative Medicaid redesign program called the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program. DSRIP is the main mechanism by which New York State will implement the Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT) Waiver Amendment. DSRIP's purpose is to fundamentally restructure the health care delivery system by reinvesting in the Medicaid program, with the primary goal of reducing avoidable hospital use by 25% over 5 years. Up to \$6.42 billion dollars are allocated to this program with payouts based upon achieving predefined results in system transformation, clinical management and population health. Claire is responsible for the implementation of the new program for the Borough of Queen, New York.

Claire Patterson-Monah

Claire Patterson-Monah, the newly appointed Senior Associate Executive Director of the Queens Health Network- DSRIP Coordinator-Queens Hub, She is a distinctive, robust contributor who impacts multitudes in the Guyanese and Caribbean communities by selflessly combining an indefatigable work ethic with wealth and wisdom.

In an article published recently in the Queen's Tribune, Claire Patterson-Monah discussed Elmhurst Hospital's vision for community healthcare improvement. She distilled that vision into the phrase.

"It really starts with partnering with your community."

Elmhurst Hospital is one of two HHC locations in Queens, alongside Queens Hospital in Jamaica.

She went on to say that community partnerships – with groups such as the YMCA, local health clinics or government agencies – help the hospital identify "hotspots" of patient needs in the Borough.

For example, by collaborating with housing agencies, hospitals can start to tackle homelessness as a social determinant of poor health, Patterson explained. She also noted an initiative with MetroPlus and Health First health insurance plans to identify which populations are not obtaining health insurance, and why.

"We're at the beginning stages but I have to tell you, just engaging our community... really helped us identify some of the health services challenges in this community so that we're hitting what we call the 'hot spots' and not just doing a blanket sort of approach to improving population health," Patterson said.

For an area as diverse as Queens, community partnerships with neighborhood organizations such as the Plaza del Sol Family Health Center in Corona can also help provide healthcare geared towards specific populations.

"We don't have to be the provider of care but we have to partner with people in the community who can provide culturally sensitive care and should they regretfully need to be hospitalized, this is where they come to the big hospital," Patterson said.

These partnerships are part of a larger effort at Elmhurst Hospital to refocus healthcare from reactive to preventive, Patterson said. The overarching goal is to reduce avoidable hospital admissions by 25 percent over five years.



According to Patterson, a Community Needs Assessment conducted last year revealed one means of achieving this goal: because many Queens patients suffer from mental health and substance abuse problems, an initiative

to coordinate primary care with treatment for those issues was put in place.

"We are just working hard at being patient-centered because listening to our patients and responding to their needs gets us the best and biggest bang for our buck," she said.

Another major challenge that both the Elmhurst and Jamaica Hospitals hope to address in expanding preventive care is the burden on physicians. According to a 2011 Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene report, much of Queens suffers from physician shortages compared to the Citywide average.

Physicians in Queens have a lot more patients to care for and that creates an access burden. You have more patients, and you may not be able to afford your patients access in a timely manner," Patterson said.

Forces outside the HHC have taken up the burden on Queens hospitals as well. To address the weight carried by Elmhurst Hospital in particular, Councilwoman Julissa Ferreras (D-East Elmhurst) promised in a State of the District speech last week that she would push to close a \$11.1 million funding gap for the hospital, which she said could expand space in the overburdened emergency department.

Patterson also spoke about the impact of the Affordable Care Act – which requires preventive care for all health plans offered on the Marketplace – on HHC service.

"When the Affordable Care Act was signed into law, the goal was to ensure that we have more value for every dollar spent on healthcare in the U.S. So this program that we're working on, the goals are really aligned with what has emerged to be a unifying strategy for the Affordable Care Act and that is better care," Patterson said.

"We've got to improve the overall quality by making health care more patient-centered, reliable and accessible," she added. *"It's a tremendous effort. It will take time, but I think we're moving by and large in the right direction."*

excerpt from Queens Tribune article, February 2015

CELEBRATING

DR. KEITH WILSON

RETIRED PROJECT MANAGER
FOR NASA'S LASER
COMMUNICATIONS RELAY
DEMONSTRATION (LCRD)
OPTICAL GROUND STATION

Now retired and living in Georgia, USA, Dr. Keith Wilson is the son the late Edgar M. Wilson, former Headmaster of Charlestown Government School and English Literature Lecturer at the University of Guyana.

Before leaving Guyana in 1968, Dr. Wilson worked at the Law Courts in Vreed-en-hoop, and he went on to teach at Carmel Roman Catholic School and Charlestown Government School. In the United States he attended California Polytechnic University where he graduated with a B.Sc. (with Honors) in Physics. He received the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Physics from the University of Southern California and returned to his alma mater, California Polytechnic University at Pomona as an Assistant Professor of Physics.

While at Hughes Research Laboratories (HRL) Malibu, California he worked on the development of interferometer techniques to measure the transient thermal effects in optically pumped high power solid state lasers. At Allied Corp.'s Apollo Lasers in Chatsworth, California where he was responsible for Alexandrite laser technology transfer from Allied Corp.'s-New Jersey Labs to California and for expanding the tunable range of the new laser material. As an employee at Litton Guidance and Control in Woodland Hills, Dr. Wilson received three U.S. patents for developing methods to stabilize the emission wavelength of super luminescent diodes, the optical sources for fiber-optic gyroscopes. At that time he also established Optica, a consulting company that specialized in solid-state laser design.

During his years at Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), which is the leading U.S. center for robotic exploration



of the solar system, his focus had been on free-space optical links to satellites and spacecraft. In 1992, he led a team of JPL and U.S. Air Force engineers to demonstrate the first optical link to a deep space probe, the Galileo spacecraft. In 1995, his team demonstrated the first bi-directional optical link to a satellite at geostationary distances, the Japanese ETS-VI satellite. Dr. Keith Wilson has been responsible for developing NASA's first optical ground station, the Optical Communications Telescope Laboratory at Table Mountain California, and commissioned the facility in 2004. In 2009 he led a team that demonstrated an optical link to the low Earth-orbiting Japanese satellite, OICETS. Subsequently, this laboratory has demonstrated laser transmissions to the International Space Station and to the LADEE spacecraft orbiting the moon.

Before retiring from JPL, Dr Wilson was a Principal Member of the JPL Technical Staff, and the Project Manager for NASA's Laser Communications Relay Demonstration (LCRD) Optical Ground Station (OGS). He led a team responsible for developing the ground station technology for gigabit/sec bi-directional optical links with a geostationary satellite. This was a precursor to a new generation of NASA Telecommunications and Data Relay Satellites. LCRD explored both the operational and networking challenges of high bandwidth bi-directional space-to-ground optical links.

Dr. John R. Rickford, professor of Stanford University acknowledged Dr. Wilson's contribution to space and space technology when he addressed the 170th Anniversary of Queen's College in Guyana last October.



Dr. Paloma Mohamed is one of the most prolific academics (communication and behavioural studies) and creative writers (playwright, script-writer and poet) in the region. A key figure in Guyana's culture and academe, she has been producing creative work since the age of 13, and has, to date, won the Guyana Prize on three occasions (1998, 2000 and 2008). She is recognized as one of the most influential figures in the Guyanese and Caribbean cultural landscape.

Dr Mohamed has written and had performed more than 30 plays, and published two collections of poetry with a third expected this year. She has also branched into film, and has been executive producer on 32 films. She has published nine books of creative work and has been involved in 14 major arts projects, including Healing Arts, one which teaches children to write for other children. In 2010, she developed KIDSTAGE, the first and only televised children's talent series in Guyana. She is the founder of Healing Arts Guyana Inc., a founding director of Moray House Trust and is chair of the Theatre Guild of Guyana.

In addition to contributing to the writing of the drama syllabus for CAPE, her creative works have been placed on both the syllabi of CSEC and CAPE, as well being used as test pieces for students at the Department of Creative and Festival Arts at the University of the West Indies and the University of Maryland. She has been active in adjudicating drama competitions throughout the region, from the secondary school to the interna-

DR. PALOMA MOHAMED

RECIPIENT OF THE 2015 ANTHONY N. SABGA CARIBBEAN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

tional levels. As an arts advocate she has developed policy in conjunction with national and international agencies, like CARICOM, the United Nations, and several national bodies such as the Ministry of Culture.

As a filmmaker, she produced the first Guyanese full-length movie (Jezebel – The Movie (1992), (shot on video), co-organized the first Guyanese film festival in the US, and recently founded CineGuyana Inc. As an academic, Dr Mohamed is the outgoing Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, at the University of Guyana, and has worked with various UN agencies (like the UNDP and UNFPA) to produce reports and conduct projects on topics as diverse as adolescent sexual and reproductive rights, and the status of young artists in the region.

Her books include The Massacuraman (2014), Duenne (2013) (1998, Guyana Prize winner), A Man Called Garvey (2001) and Caribbean Mythology and Modern Life 5 Plays for Young People (2003). Her plays include Testament (2008), Father of the Man (2002), Trouble in Paradise (1996). Her academic publications include Notes on the media in Guyana (2014), Communications, Power and Change in the Caribbean (2013), and Media Trends: Representations of Women and Children in the Guyanese Media 2007-2009, among many others.

- See more at:

<http://www.ansacaribbeanawards.com/laureates/dr-paloma-mohamed/#sthash.G7a9vUNp.dpuf>

IN MEMORY

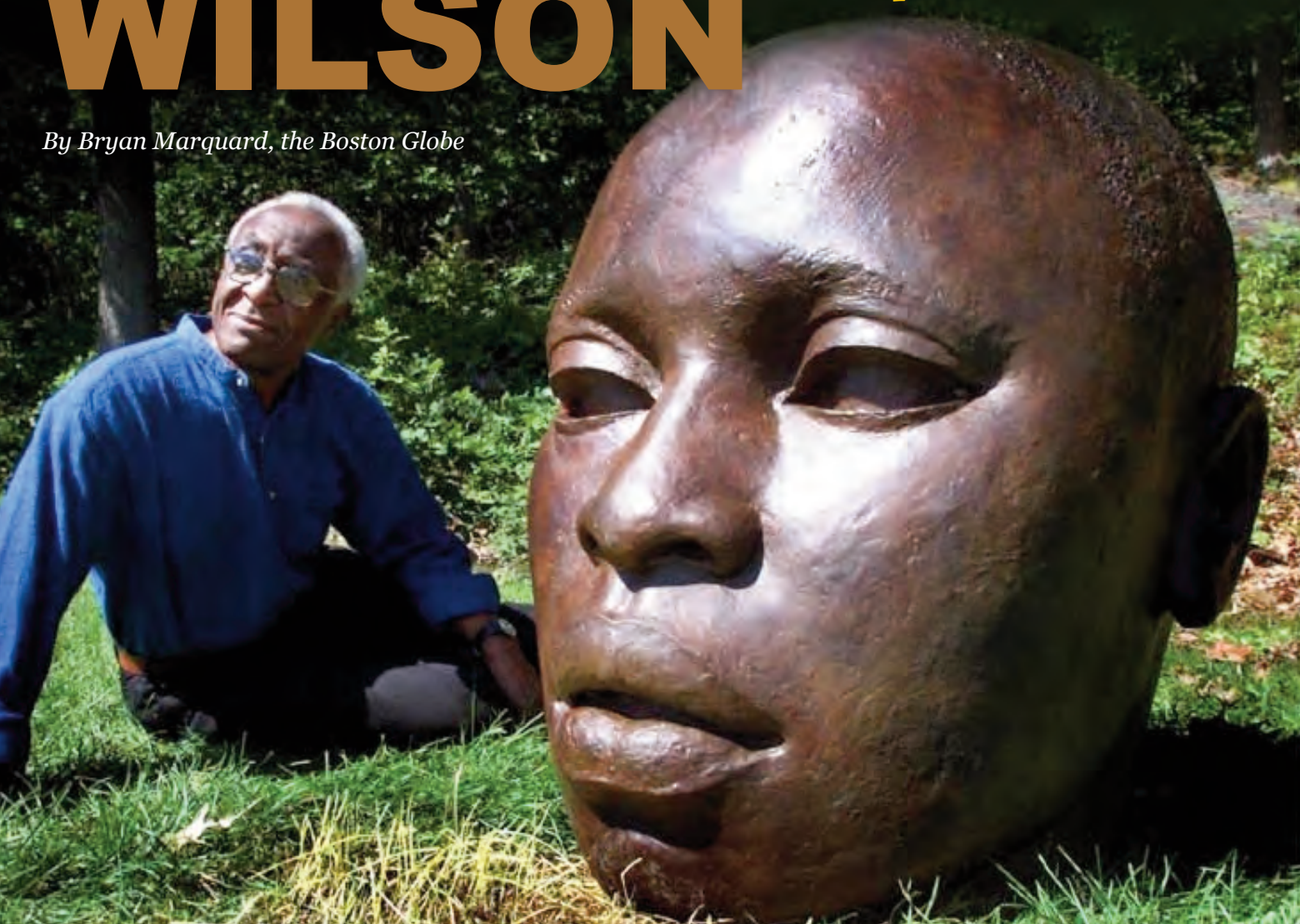
ART:

Mr. Wilson's own journey to prominence was fueled in part by his reaction to art he saw as a teenager during visits to the MFA.

"None of these people looked like me and just by omission the implication was that black people were not capable of being beautiful and true and precious,"

JOHN WILSON

By Bryan Marquard, the Boston Globe



A TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF JOHN WILSON

“... he felt that his main objective as an artist was to deliver a message to people about black dignity, about racial justice, about poor people trying to get a better deal in life,”

In the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C., stands a 3-foot-tall bronze bust of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. that is surely the most viewed creation of John Wilson, an artist who grew up in Roxbury and painted, sculpted, and made prints out of his home studio in Brookline for decades.

Like much of his most important work, the bust brings viewers to the intersection of art and politics, of pure creativity and the desire to examine social injustice. Mr. Wilson, who was 92 when he died Thursday evening in his Brookline home, pursued that path since he was a boy on Roxbury’s streets, learning to sketch and honing a burgeoning talent that eventually would place his paintings and sculptures in the Museum of Fine Arts and far beyond.

“To me the eloquence of the piece is not only in the face, but in the rhythms of the gesture,” Mr. Wilson told the *Globe* in 1986, just before the bust was unveiled in the Rotunda on what would have been King’s 57th birthday. “The head is tilted forward, as if to communicate with the viewer. I hope the sculpture will stimulate people to learn more about King, to perpetuate his struggle.”

Mr. Wilson’s own journey to prominence was fueled in part by his reaction to art he saw as a teenager during visits to the MFA.

“None of these people looked like me and just by omission the implication was that black people were not capable of being beautiful and true and precious,” he told the *Globe* in 1995 when “Dialogue: John Wilson/Joseph Norman,” opened at the MFA and his own sculptures and sketches shared museum space with the work that drew his criticism years before.

Of that show, *Globe* art critic Christine Temin wrote that Mr. Wilson “emerges as a powerful artist, too little known for someone who has produced stellar work for half a century.”

Writing about “Eternal Presence,” a career survey of Mr. Wilson’s work that opened in 2012 in Danforth Art, *Globe* art critic Sebastian Smea called him “one of Boston’s most esteemed and accomplished artists” and



A self portrait of John Wilson from 1943.

wrote that from Mr. Wilson’s early sketches to his more recent large-scale charcoal drawings, “the impulse has remained the same: It is an impulse toward clarity, toward truth.”

“I think he will gain in importance as time goes on,” said Katherine French, director emerita of Danforth Art, where several of Mr. Wilson’s works remain on display through May 17.

“He will be recognized as a major artist of the 20th century. I really have no doubt about that,” added French, who has finished curating “John Wilson: Boston’s Native Son,” a show that opens in the St. Botolph Club Feb. 18.

The second of five siblings, Mr. Wilson was born in 1922 in Roxbury, where his parents settled after emigrating from British Guiana and found little work once the Great Depression hit. Mr. Wilson always was aware of racial inequities. His father regularly read African-American newspapers such as *The Amsterdam News*, which seemed to have images of lynchings in “practically every other issue,” Mr. Wilson said in a 2012 interview with French, who wrote an essay about the artist that Danforth Art will soon publish.

Drawn to art classes at Roxbury Memorial High School, Mr. Wilson was art editor of the school newspaper and took classes at the Boys Club from teachers who were students at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts.

They showed his work to faculty at the Museum school, which awarded a full scholarship to Mr. Wilson. There, he counted among his teachers Karl Zerbe, a Boston Expressionist born in Germany. Years later, critics would see early evidence of Mr. Wilson's talent in "Boy with Bow Tie," drawn in his mid-teens.

In 1945, Mr. Wilson graduated from the Museum school with highest honors, and one of his works was included in "The Negro Artist Comes of Age," an Albany Institute of History and Art exhibition. He taught at Boris Mirski modern art school in Boston and graduated in 1947 with a bachelor's degree in education from Tufts University. Among his key works during those years was a print depicting Bigger Thomas, the protagonist of Richard Wright's 1940 novel "Native Son." Mr. Wilson also developed an admiration for Mexican muralists, particularly Jose Clemente Orozco.

Awarded a traveling fellowship from the MFA, Mr. Wilson moved to Paris and studied with the modern artist Fernand Leger. After returning home, Mr. Wilson visited the Lower East Side in New York City, where he met Julie Kowitch, a teacher who had graduated from Brooklyn College. They married in 1950 and went to Mexico on a John Hay Whitney Fellowship. As an interracial couple, they traveled by necessity in separate cars while passing through the segregated South.

Though Orozco died a few months before he arrived in Mexico, Mr. Wilson was drawn to mural making — art that could be viewed by those who, like him, had grown up in the streets with neither the money for museums nor social access to private collections. A lasting work from this period was "The Trial," a lithograph depicting three judges, their faces hidden behind white theatrical masks, looming vulture-like over a young black boy who stands awaiting judgment.

Back in the United States, Mr. Wilson produced lithographs for unions in Chicago and taught in New York City before returning to Massachusetts in 1964 to teach at Boston University. Over the years, his work was included in exhibits at museums and galleries including the Museum of Fine Arts and Martha Richardson Fine Art on Newbury Street. Mr. Wilson also worked to create the National Center of Afro-American Artists in Roxbury.

Artist John Wilson



“Essentially, he felt that his main objective as an artist was to deliver a message to people about black dignity, about racial justice, about poor people trying to get a better deal in life,” his wife said. But also, sketching constantly on index cards and any available scrap of paper, Mr. Wilson composed portraits of family members, friends, and life unfolding around him. During one car trip to New York City with his daughter and infant grandson, “he did a series of sketches of him over the backseat of the car,” said his daughter Erica of Brookline. “I have them framed in my hallway.”

A perfectionist in everything he did, Mr. Wilson “was incredibly physical when he worked,” his son recalled.

“He moved with tremendous energy. Each stroke seemed decisive.”

In 1986, Mr. Wilson wrapped the King sculpture in blankets and an old sleeping bag, tucked it into the back of his Mazda, and headed to the Capitol Rotunda. Before that trip, he had not stepped inside the Capitol building.

“Somehow it seemed like the epitome of the seat of power, and it alienated me,” he told the Globe in 1986. “I never felt part of it. But when I delivered the sculpture, that changed. I felt, ‘A piece of me is in that building.’”



Victor Davson

DUB FACTOR REDUX

February 8th - March 15th

Opening Event : February 15th 2-6pm

In Honor of Black History Month,
Gallery 1978 presents:

Dub Factor Redux

Victor Davson, an artist and founding director of Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art in Newark, has created a series of paintings on LP record album covers. These individual works combine to create a large installation called the "Dub Factor Series." They represent a facet of the American music cultural phenomenon - depicting popular and iconic figures - which were an influence on him growing up in Guyana.

photo credit : Arlington Weithers

Opening Times

February 8th - March 15th

Gallery hours

**Saturdays & Sundays
2-5pm**

Closing Event :

March 15th

28

2015 BLACK HISTORY MONTH

CELEBRATING
**VALERIE
CODDETT**

LIVING WITH
THE MASTERS



INTRODUCTION TO AN EXHIBITION AT
FORSBERG-RIVERSIDE GALLERIES CENTRE
FOR THE ARTS, WATERLOO, IOWA

My name is Valerie Coddett. I live in New York City. I collect art - Haitian art as well as works by other artists in the diaspora. The collection includes artwork of Haitian artist, Emanuel Merisier. Today we have the honor of viewing his paintings. The first time I encountered Merisier's work, it was at the home of Selden Rodman who has written many books, including books on Haitian art. I am in the process of writing a novelette, *Living with the Masters* that narrates my experience in the world of art, specifically the interaction between me and the paintings I live with. They have existed for many years in close proximity, disagreements would be the norm. A Boxing Match takes place between a painting executed by Emanuel Merisier and that of another artist; both paintings carry the same name: 'Hide and Seek' vs. 'Hide & Seek.' I have pulled the Excerpt from the novelette to share with viewers.

About 19 years ago, I discovered the work of Merisier. His images and colors stared at me, they seemed strange. Without an explanation, a handle to understand them, one is lost. On April 17, 1994, the New York Times Art Critic Vivien Raynor - in *Two Exhibitions Intended to Contrast the Mind and the Body* - remarked - "Emmanuel Merisier catches the eye with 'Voodoo Priest,' an Expressionist painting of a woman smoking a pipe, a man with a grotesquely elongated nose and, between them, a serpent."

About the serpent - I learned later that Damballah is the father of gods, the serpent divinity and one of the most respected African Gods associated with wisdom, peace, purity and innocence. The Greeks have their Gods - Triton, Neptune, Poseidon and many points of references are encountered in volumes of books. Likewise, there are gods in the Haitian pantheon - in the Voodoo religion that slaves brought with them to the new world - Gods they honor. Haitian art is mystical because Haiti is mystical, declared Andre Pierre, one of Haiti's renowned painters in a 1997 interview with Gregory Katz in *Art & Antiques Magazine*. Indeed, amidst fantastical imagery, Merisier adds a modern 'expressionist' technique to narrate the folk stories of Haiti. Three "Ms" define him: mysticism, myth and

modernism.

It was forty nine years ago that he emigrated to the United States. First, he worked in building construction; and, during his free time, devoted himself to learning his craft - painting, visiting museums and buying art books. He caught the attention of Selden Rodman, a champion of Haitian and folk art who bought five of his works. Brightly colored canvases adorn the Selden Rodman Gallery of Popular Arts of the Americas and the Caribbean at Ramapo College in Mahwah, New Jersey. A later exhibition of his work was entitled 'The Haitian Picasso - Spiritual art.' He is an example of the evolution of Haitian art from primitivism to modernism. Today, we'll view 40 canvases at this Centre for the Arts that holds the largest volume of Haitian Art in the United States.

Merisier is mentioned in the *Encarta Africana* edited by Henry Louis Gates and Dr. Kwame Anthony Appiah, Microsoft, (2 CD-ROM disks) January 1999, (2.5 million word encyclopedia, June 1999) "Haitian Art: Responses to National Identity," a 1500-word article written by Andre Juste.



The Drummer



Emanuel Merisier - The Wedding

I was born in New Amsterdam, Guyana, and emigrated to the United States some fifty years ago. While living in New York City, I began collecting paintings. The journey into this realm began with 'music' pursued during my childhood days in Guyana. One art form - music - led to another art form - art.

Living with the Masters is a story that takes place in the world of art and reflects the interaction between me and the artwork I have encountered. Having shared my passion and pulled in many friends/acquaintances into the arena, it is now incumbent on me to share the experience with others. The offering takes place as in a dream. The paintings and I have been living in overcrowded rooms for many years - dissension was bound to occur sooner or later. Image to image, the paintings fight, they jostle, they joke and narrate the stories themselves.



St. Louis Blaise (Haiti) - La Sirene

Valerie Coddett

The Sirene of St. Louis Blaise spoke - "I need more room. I feel strangled in this position. I can barely move my tail. This is no way to live! I must expand my territory." Confined in a stream amidst flora, foliage and a swan, jealousy was playing a part in her belligerence, and she envisioned a flood bigger than that of Noah's around her person. Her partner, Goddess - La Sirene, stood atop two sharks in a wide open space at sea, surrounded by miles and miles of water. Water - water everywhere - more than 71.6% of earth. La Sirene possessed the ability to move around easily; she could swim back to Africa if she wished. Loas from the brushes of André Pierre did in 1804 at the end of the Haitian Revolution. Erzulie, Goddess of Love about whom so many myths abound, emerged from the sea. A goddess of beauty and passion, she bore ancient treasures and spread her bounty in all directions - artwork of Hector Hyppolite, Philome Obin, Castera Bazile et al. frequently appeared at auctions.

Wind, water, spirit of the ocean, La Sirene floated like a flower adrift at sea; she possessed power in the Haitian pantheon where she'd earned her position. Benoit painted scenes from daily life - Baptisms, Adoration of Voodoo Gods, and Carnival of Flowers. On her fins and with garlands around her neck, La Sirene stood tall. No one painted flowers the way Benoit did. Multiple flowers adorned the altars in those churches where his "Interrupted Marriage" ceremonies had taken place, the paintings depicting magnificent tales. For those viewers who knew that Benoit was married to the daughter of Hector Hyppolite, one of Haiti's greatest masters, viewing his 'interrupted' marriage paintings would have been quite amusing.

THE BOXING MATCH

Tension was running from A to Z, each painting wondering who would be the next victim of Spain's Salvador Dali. But Dali, undaunted, proceeded to stare at blank sheets of paper that his agent was placing before him for signature. He seemed to be still in a pugnacious mood, and Danny Simmons of the USA suggested he witness a real fight. A fierce bout was going to be held near the dining room area between a contender from Trinidad and another from Haiti. Danny and Dali strolled over to the dining room area. The two contenders had just entered a stage that was divided into two sections, one for each artist.

ENTER Glen Martin of Trinidad - he slams down his painting. The whole painting comes to life. It is a delicate work of art, and a good match for his opponent.

ENTER Emanuel Merisier of Haiti from the other side of the stage. He bangs his painting on the floor. It breathes life. The crowd roars. Both contenders prance. Dali, the referee sternly looks at both of them and makes a sign, the commencement of the first bout.



Emanuel Merisier (Haiti) - *Hide and Seek*



Glen Martin (Trinidad) - *Hide & Seek*

Round 1: Merisier's painting is a large one. Already, he has an advantage for he is a tall man with a long reach. His brilliant colors smack Martin in the face, POW POW POW!

Round 2: Both boxers are addressed in the same manner - Hide and Seek vs. Hide & Seek. They demonstrate their skills.

Round 3: "Who is hiding better behind the punches? This is going to be rough, O' boy!" Dali shouts. In Martin's corner, on the left one boy loftily rests on the branch of a tree. His foot dangles in a teasingly manner. Can Merisier get hold of it? [JAB - Pull me down!] Another boy, wearing a blue shirt, hides at the foot of the tree that stands opposite - [JAB - Find me!] Two darling little girls, dressed in white as if they are about to attend a birthday party, begin searching for the boys. One runs, and the other stops for she is unsure. [Martin's punch is beginning to lack power]. JAB<>JAB! Merisier now begins using the rope-a-dope technique to tire his opponent while he conserves much energy. But let's look at the scene - set in a park or in a delightful garden that one can enter - what perspective. Much light filters in, and one can almost experience the weather for a strong wind is blowing and leaves scatter. . . JAB<>JAB<> JAB!

Dali agitatedly turns his face from left to right to ascertain who is the better painter? Martin's picture is beautiful, yes, but where are the heavy punches, the upper cuts?

Round 4: Dali continues: "Merisier's brilliant colors continue to project blows on his opponent. What an effect! JAB<>JAB! His technical skills - there seems to be a storm raging, swirling around the vase. He controls the tempest beautifully. JAB<>JAB<>JAB!! Beast, Bird, Humans, Flowers all seek refuge in the vase . . . a paradox! JAB<>JAB - It is not necessary to seek out anyone in Merisier's Hide and Seek. Folks hide in plain sight. JAB<>JAB<>JAB!

I rest my case..."

CLANG CLANG CLANG

Dali stands to present the trophy to the winner.

On the day of their wedding, the bride's face was wreathed in sadness for she did not know Merisier, he was in disguise. Her parents had forced her to marry him. Their prediction, he would be successful.

The dancers could not contain their joy and jumped off the wall to celebrate in Merisier's success.



Petion Savain (Haiti) - *Ceremony - Dance*

A celebration - viewers would often remark that the painting with the rooster, *The Beating of the Drum* resembled the work of Chagall - dancers surrounded by fish, fowl, bird and beast roaming - all speaking for Haitians in a united voice of peace and love. Max Beckmann, Georges Rouault, Picasso and Thornton Dial have all influenced Merisier. His paintings relate the folk stories of Haiti, and they are full of mystery. The symbol of a cross in his work represents the sub-standard situation that exists in Haiti. Folks pray, for they cannot escape, and their belief makes them strong.

At an exhibition of Merisier's paintings in 1993 at the home of Selden Rodman,¹ a leading authority on Haitian art, Mr. Rodman said: "This is the first show of Haitian art that must be considered not merely in the category of 'popular' or 'primitive' art but in the mainstream of modern art in the 20th Century."

¹Selden Rodman, *Haitian Art: Where Art is Joy - The First Forty Years*. Ruggles Latour, 1989



Emanuel Merisier (Haiti) - *The Beating of the Drum*
(Courtesy of Arlington Weithers, photographer)

It is obligatory for me to commence this article by commending (bigging-up) the leadership of the Guyana Cultural Association for keeping the Body alive, while untiringly ensuring that it continues to engage both old and young Guyanese with literary and demonstrative aspects of Guyanese (in particular) culture.

Let me use an instance in order to point out the important and relevant role that the GCA is playing. A University of Guyana Lecturer who was recently invited to speak to an Adult Education Class at Providence on the East Bank of Demerara, explained that the class' attendees averaged 28 years of age, but he noted that when he posed questions about recent Guyanese history to the participants, most of them claimed that they did not know what he was talking about, because those things did not happen in their time...Hence the need for an entity like the GCA, in the context of today's Guyana.

ACTION(s): In organizational excursions, one encounters Groupings with lucid Constitutions and By- Laws; laudable dreams; aspirations and visions, pluperfect mission- statements; and paper-projections, but then there is the marked vacancies of ACTION(s)--hence my



big-ups for the EFFERVESCENT and DYNAMIC endeavors of the GCA. Furthermore, I need to emphasize that I am not being political. It is just a fact of life to me and others, that with GCA, platforms are where one sees real (public) demonstrations of Guyana's racial plurality; mergers of political persuasions; mending of age-differences; and exhibitions/reminders of Guyana's rich cultural products and their producers. Among the major annual productions that brand the GCA are Annual Symposia; Annual Awards Ceremony; a Family Fun-Day; Que-Que displays; "Literary Hangs"; a Summer-Workshop series for young people; and a Video and Film series. I always try to find ways and means to praise the efforts and work of volunteers, because they are donating their free time to give back to the society that they hail from, and they are filling voids--especially in terms of the disclosures that came from the Lecturer at that Adult Education class.

It is also obligatory for me to recognize the sacrifices of time that GCA members and supporters make, in order to participate in meaningful retreats to plan, design, and implement their plans and activities for today, tomorrow, and the days after.

ANALYSES

Some colleagues and I constantly use the monthly issues of the GCA's Magazine to discuss positive contributions that the Association and its contributors are making towards the maintenance and survival of Guyanese culture. I must add that those analyses are normally made and described over beverages and cutters--a normal Guyanese way of doing things. The GCA is on the right side of CULTURE, because it was reported that that word/term/concept was the most (dictionary) consulted during 2014.

RELEVANT DESCRIPTIONS

Because of the disclosures from that Lecturer at the Providence Adult Education class, I think it necessary for me to include in this article, the following definitions/descriptions:--

Culture: Of the many and varied meanings applied to this word, I have opted to go with Texas A&M's definition. Culture is the deposit of knowledge; experiences; beliefs; values; attitudes; religions; and roles within a society. Cultural relates to the customs and social behavior of a society. Guyana is 83,000 square miles; it is the only English-speaking country on the mainland of South America; Guyana gained its Independence from Great Britain on May 26, 1966; it became the cooperative Republic of Guyana, on February 23rd, 1970.

An association is normally made up of like-minded persons who have agreed to work towards the achievement of set goals and objectives. I normally conclude my articles with a brief poem, so here it is:--MASH : The month of February highlights Mashramani. Let there be dancing and prancing costumes reminiscent of Chan and Goring. For a change, let's relax politics and honor the Republic.

A Perspective on Contemporary Immigrant Experience

George A. Glean Sr.

Many of the English-Speaking Caribbean countries, perhaps with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica, have a paucity of resources to sustain their growing population. As a result, unemployment and the lack of some basic infrastructural essentials, have led to deterioration in the overall quality of life, causing serious public concern.

To combat this scourge, a substantive portion of the population is forced to consider migration, primarily to North America. Most people migrate to a foreign land simply to educate themselves and others and to “make ends meet” and hopefully provide a future for their children. The decision to emigrate is generally motivated by the opportunity to secure a comfortable, decent lifestyle. This is a cherished ideal, but unfortunate for some, an unlikely accomplishment in their respective home countries. In many cases, the experience of sojourning to a foreign land is seen as the biblical Joshua. A sizeable number of immigrants are saddled with the obligatory responsibility of sending remittances (in cash and kind) to their family, friends and community back home.

Landing and resettling in the United States, particularly for those with non-immigrant visas is characterized by a number of arbitrary and legally compromising decisions. This includes the temptation of overstaying one’s visa and unauthorized labor force participation. These result in the need to live “under the radar” for fear of being detected and possibly deported.

Finding a job in America, one of the principal goals for the immigrant, can be at times relatively easy. However, for both the documented and undocumented, many challenges emerge regarding the nature and unexpected demands of employment. The job is likely to be menial in nature, such as factory or domestic work, often labor intensive, involving health safety hazards and risks, extended hours, unexpected low wages, and under deplorable conditions. The down grading of occupational status among some professional immigrants may also cause emotional problems (see Lear Matthews, 2014). Perhaps, one consoling reality is that when money is remitted back to the home country, its value is tripled because of the rate of exchange.

The salient point here is that many immigrants appear to be desperate in their effort to add a little dignity to their life and that of their family. Consequently, in the process of seeking opportunity, they take major life-altering risks by migrating to the United States. Unfortunately, many are not prepared for the compromising sacrifices they must endure, despite the fact that the primary motivation for leaving the home country is economic and not sentimental.

Of course immigrants have been successful in their personal and career development, contributing meaningfully to the US economy. However, the experience of the undocumented immigrant is further complicated as he or she attempts to adapt to the host society. The unpredictable hardships of surviving, particularly in the metropolitan area may result in a morass of personal and social challenges. He or she may begin a romantic relationship, marry and start a new family. Temporary engagement in transnational parenting adds to the predicament. Based on the U.S. Immigration laws, the children born in the United States are U.S. Citizens. This assumes the “anchorage” of undocumented immigrant parents, although placing them at risk. Nevertheless, President Obama’s 2014 Executive Order of Deferred Action, if approved, would preclude the possibility of parents’ deportation in this situation.

Notwithstanding pending legislation, this writer proposes the granting of a 10 year non-immigrant visa, along with a work permit. For those immigrants who become Legal Permanent Residents or citizens through marriage, all penalties should be waived. If, on the other hand, they do not gain permanent residency through application, they should opt to return to their country of origin voluntarily after 10 years, or would be subject to penalties as prescribed by US immigration law. Perhaps, the lifestyle demands of the United States of America is not designed for everyone.

Citation:

Matthews, L. (2014) English Speaking Caribbean Immigrants: Transnational Identities. Rowman and Littlefield (UPA): Boulder.

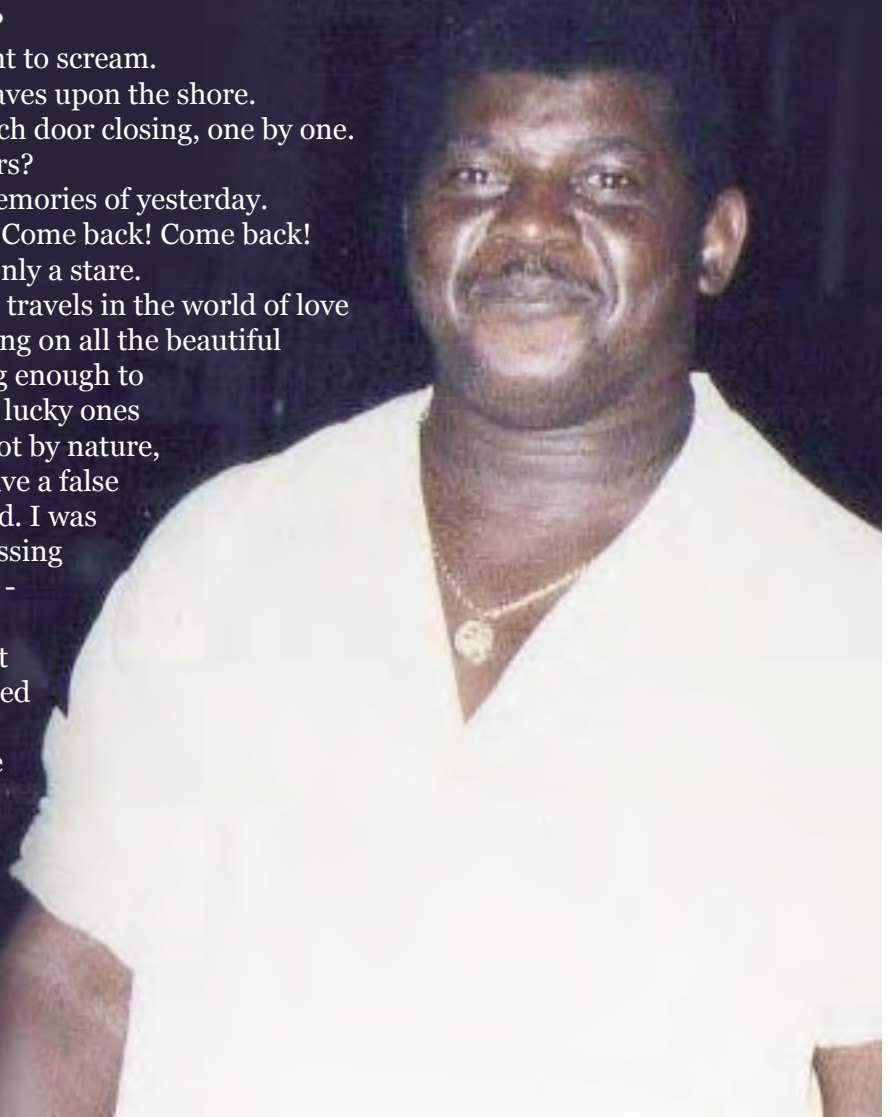
IN MEMEORY

Compton Maurice Ross

Jean Ross

I remember the day that we met. The weather was cool.
 And so were you.
 You looked debonair. Your crisp white shirt showed no dirt.
 You were ready to flirt.
 As you stretched out your hand, our eyes met.
 Though fleeting, I would never forget.
 Furtive glances, taking chances.
 Never knowing why - will never meet again.
 Why hold back the pain of never seeing each other again.
 I have lived my life from day to day.
 With memories of yesteryear. Be it happy or sad.
 The thoughts never fade away.
 Should I be glad? Was this a fad?
 Is life a dream? Sometimes I want to scream.
 Daily the thoughts roll in, like waves upon the shore.
 It's like a corridor with doors, each door closing, one by one.
 What's hidden behind those doors?
 Daily I have lived my life with memories of yesterday.
 Fleeting, reaching. Out of touch. Come back! Come back!
 Please be aware. I was left with only a stare.
 Over the years I have likened my travels in the world of love
 to that of a humming bird stopping on all the beautiful
 flowers with admiration and long enough to
 extract some of their nectar. The lucky ones
 were pollinated. A philanderer not by nature,
 but by imitating a culture that gave a false
 impression to the immature mind. I was
 free to glide upon the wings caressing
 each beauty with my exuberance -
 while some in awe expressed the
 perfect match and tried in vain at
 ownership only to be disappointed
 by elusive acrobatics.
 The fortunate ones cherished the
 experience of being touched and
 judged me by the heart, not by
 the mind.
 To imprison a free spirit would
 place me in a cage of despair.
 Longing to be free, I live in
 solitude and a reverie
 of yesteryear.

Daily I have
 lived my life
 with memories
 of yesterday!



MEMORIAL SERVICE
in memory of
DESMOND C. GRAHAM

IN LOVING MEMORY

Desmond Clifford Alan Graham

AUGUST 11, 1950 - FEBRUARY 17, 2015



*Please Join us for a Memorial Service honoring
Desmond's Life on March 28, 2015.*

Location:

*Full Gospel Assembly
131 Sullivan Place, Brooklyn, NY, 11225
(Between Rogers & Bedford Ave)*

*Service From 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm
Repass: 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm*

THE NEWARK BOYS CHORUS

ST. GABRIEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2015
4:00 p.m.

For the first time at
St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church –
THE NEWARK BOYS CHORUS -
their fine voices will echo
through our sanctuary.

They are creating a special program for
St. Gabriel's and will be performing along
with a string quartet.

Don't miss it!

Bring your youngsters!

Admission - 25.00 for Adults
\$10 for children under 12 years old

PLEASE INVITE OTHERS.