MOHAWK HUDSON FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL
I am excited to join with you today for the Mohawk Hudson Folklife Festival!

The Mohawk Hudson Folklife Festival is the result of community-based research to identify traditional artists, community cultural experts, and community advocates throughout Albany and Rensselaer Counties. Named the Upstate Regional Documentation Initiative, this project is in its sixth year. Through the support of the Folk Arts Program of the New York State Council on the Arts, the project has provided research-based programming in several regions of New York State. Fieldworkers Edgar Betelu, Ladan Nikravan, and Anne Rappaport, along with intern Reyers Brusoe, have provided their expertise to the Capital Region project.

The Capital District enjoys a rich tapestry of diverse communities, with many skilled individuals who are engaged in folk cultural activities. The performances and presentations you see here today may be, for the artists, the first time that they have presented their art form outside of their community. Come delight in the diversity of artistic expression that is found in the Capital District of New York. Enjoy the Festival!

Sincerely,

Ellen McHale
About New York Folklore

New York Folklore is a statewide organization, headquartered in Schenectady. We are a membership organization, open to all, concerned with furthering cultural equity and strengthening the understanding of the role of folk and traditional culture in our lives. New York Folklore supports folk and traditional artists, community cultural experts, community-based cultural organizations, and those who work as public folklorists throughout New York State. More information about New York Folklore can be found at www.nyfolklore.org.

What is Folklore?

Folklore and folk arts are essential ways of communicating heritage. Every group of people that shares a sense of identity shares folklore as part of that identity. Folklore is a way that people comment upon and creatively make sense of their shared experiences. Examples of folklore and folk culture in New York State include geographically localized traditions such as Adirondack fiddling; culturally-based expressive art forms such as African-American quilting or Karen weaving; and urban expressions such as hip hop style in clothing and performance. Folklore’s dynamic is in the way you cook, the way you clothe yourself, and how you celebrate your favorite holiday. Folklore and folk arts expressions are so diverse that they may seem unrelated, but are connected through being transmitted aurally or through example, and the importance that they have for the preservation of culture and heritage within communities.
Demonstrators

Latifa ali Muhammad
Latifa is a local embroidery artist originally from Afghanistan. She grew up in Kabul, and began to learn from her mother when she was in her early teens. She remembers her mother always busy working on pieces of clothing or decorative pieces for friends and family. Embroidery is deeply rooted in Afghan culture. Delicate silk satin stitches are typically sewn on heavy silk, wool or cotton. Designs are intricate and precise and are not drawn on the fabric but instead minutely weaved in symmetrical and matched patterns.

Fatou Camara
Fatou is a mother of two from Ivory Coast (Danane, Danané is a city in the far west of Ivory Coast). She came to the U.S. in 2016 and speaks both French and Koyate. She, like many women from Africa, learned how to braid African hair from her mother. Hair braiding is Fatou’s primary occupation and she wishes to one day own her own salon.
Muhammad Ismail Muhammad Durdi
Muhammad Ismail and his wife, Juma Gula, are both Turkmen rug weavers and jewelry makers. Originally from Kunduz Province in Northern Afghanistan, he and his family owned and operated a shop that sold fine Turkmen rugs. While rug-making tools are difficult to transport in resettlement, jewelry making tools are easier to carry. Muhammad Ismail has continued to make traditional Afghan jewelry, even after making a new home in Albany.

Majaliwa D Maulidi
Majaliwa is a woodcarver from Congo. His interest in carving began when he was 16 years old. Majaliwa used his grandfather’s blacksmith and metal smithing tools to carve. His first work is a mask that became an inspiration of what he is capable of creating. As a young adult he fled to Tanzania and lived in a refugee camp. He lived there for over 20 years and used carving as a way to support himself. He now works full time, but like many artists he hopes to make a living from his artwork.

Jianling Yue
Jianling Yue is currently a professor of Chinese language and culture at RPI in Troy. She is from Shanxi Province, a region rich in Chinese paper-cutting culture. She learned paper cutting during her childhood. Over the years, she continues to refine her skills and create her own designs. In addition to teaching the Chinese language and culture, she has hosted workshops on Chinese paper-cutting for various cultural events and festivals.
Efthimios Stoja
Efthimios (Altin) Stoja studied Byzantine/ Macedonian style iconography with master painters in Greece. Art that adorned the church walls of his father’s village in Albania first inspired his career. Both his large-scale murals and smaller works appear in churches around the Capital Region including Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Church, St Nicholas Ukrainian Orthodox Church and St Nicholas Russian Church. Altin makes his living as a professional iconographer and painter.

Asmah Hashimi and Bibi Asia Zadran
Asmah and Bibi are Capital Region Henna artists of Afghan ancestry. Both began practicing henna designs and decorations as girls young by observing and learning from community members. Henna is a plant-based dye widely used for temporary body decoration in Afghanistan and other regions of south Asia. It is widely used in weddings to decorate brides and sometimes grooms as well as in social and holiday celebrations. This cultural tradition has been around since antiquity.

Anusha Sekhar
Anusha is a local artist based out of Clifton Park, NY. She specializes in Indian miniature painting, henna and live painting. Indian miniature painting has been around for centuries. They are traditionally small scale, colorful and highly detailed paintings that are inspired by Indian literature and religious texts.
Jordan Taylor Hill
Jordan Taylor Hill is a Long Island native living in the Hudson Valley combining influences from rhythm, poetry, and percussion to his music and style. His travels to West Africa and love for traditional culture are apparent throughout his ‘ceremonies’ in live shows combining drumming, spoken word, and storytelling. He regularly performs in clubs and theatres and conducts drumming workshops for children in schools and community organizations.

Zhong-Hua Lu
Zhong-Hua Lu was born in 1958 in Shandong Province, China. Starting at age five, Zhong-Hua learned traditional brush painting and martial arts from his family. When traditional arts were banned during the Cultural Revolution, Zhong-Hua continued to secretly practice until Chairman Mao died in 1976. Today Zhong-Hua lives in upstate NY with his wife Ellen Graf and teaches a variety of traditional arts.
The Washington Park Rumberos
The Rumberos have been drumming for over 30 years. The drummers hail from around the world, but are connected through fellowship and love of drumming. The Rumberos connect to each other and their respective communities through music, “where you have African, African American and Afro Latinos, whether black or white, you hear the sound of drums.” They call themselves Rumberos because they demand that drummers keep the beat. They are in Washington Park every Sunday after 3pm unless it is rainy.

Pakistani Music
Aurelius John plays the, Dholak, Dhol andTabla and Shaman Raphael is a Harmonium (also known as pump organ) player. Both grew up in the city of Lahore, capital of the Punjab Province in southern Pakistan. Aurelius and Shaman have been playing since they were young and routinely performs in the area along with other Pakistani musicians in religious and social gatherings. They will be accompanied by Daniel Walayat.
Mixed Roots
Mixed Roots is a multi-part band which plays AfroBeat and Reggae under the leadership of drummer, George. George grew up in Accra, Ghana, where he learned and practiced traditional African beats. Gideon, the keyboarding specialist is originally from Nigeria. Guitarist Pete, is local to upstate New York, and the hand percussionist, TT, is from Ghana, the bass lines you hear are from Jah Red, who is local to the area. The horn section features locals Dave, Catherine, and Scott. The band plays with energy emerging from their- mixed roots. For the Festival, they are also joined by Zorkie Nelson, a Ghanaian drummer from Schenectady and his son Felix, a talented dancer.

Mundo Nuevo
Mundo Nuevo is a Musical ensemble dedicated to disseminating the rich and diverse musical tradition of Latin America and Caribbean. Their repertoire includes music from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Dominican Republic, as well as Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, Brazil and other countries of Latin America. Ever mindful of the evolution of musical traditions, they have incorporated examples of Nueva Cancion.
**Pinya Aung**

Pinya Aung plays the Tenaku Harp and the Kana, instruments in the Karen musical tradition. Pinya was born and raised in the town of Hlaingbwe in Kayin State in southern Myanmar near the border with Thailand. The region has been marked by decades of political violence and persecution of the Karen and other minorities. Pinya and his family was forced to relocate to the Mae La refugee camp in Thailand and later arrived in Albany, New York. During his years in the Mae Le Refugee Camp he joined a local music and cultural organization and performed in many celebrations and community events.

**Wa Lika Band**

Patrick Kasongo is a local Mohawk-Hudson musician that has been performing in festivities and social events in the region for more than a decade. His ensemble, Wa Lika interpret Congolese Rumba and Sebene. Patrick grew up in Kinshasa, Capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo and started playing music at a young age with a self-made one string guitar similar to Diddley bows found in the US blues tradition.
Mount Olive Male Chorus

Mount Olive Male Chorus performs traditional Gospel and has been in existence for more than 50 years. Founders of the Chorus who are still active singers include:

Reverend Willie James Stovall, Sr
Deacon Hayes Coleman
Deacon Jerry Williams
Deacon Willie Joe Robinson
Deacon James Carr
Reverend House
Performance Schedule

11:30 – noon: Washington Park Drummers
noon – 12:30: Pinya Aung
1:00 – 1:45 pm: Mixed Roots
2:00 – 2:45 pm: Aurelius John, Shaman Awan and Daniel Walayat
3:00pm – 3:45pm: Wa Lika Band
4:00 pm – 4:45 pm: Mundo Nuevo
4:45 pm – 5:15 pm: Mount Olive Male Chorus

Other Vendors

Albany Bike Rescue:
http://www.albanybikerescue.org/

West Hill Refugee Welcome Center (RWC):
https://www.rwcwesthill.com/

Food

Chayla’s Cuchifrito, Kona Shaved Ice, La Capital Tacos
THANK YOU

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Golub Corp/Price Chopper Foundation, City of Albany, Diane Mbombo Tite, West Hill Refugee Welcome Center (RWC), and Humanities NY

Membership

Become a New York Folklore member today! Members receive many benefits and help us support folklife in New York State. To join online, visit our website www.nyfolklore.org. Email (info@nyfolklore.org) for new or renewal membership information.
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