



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**651 ARTS in Partnership with Downtown Brooklyn Partnership
Present
Its Fourth Annual Juneteenth Celebration in Collaboration with
The Soapbox Presents**

We Outside! A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II

**The Plaza at 300 Ashland in Downtown Brooklyn
Saturday, June 15, 2024
2pm -8pm**

(**Brooklyn, NY** – May 28, 2024) – For its Fourth Annual Juneteenth Celebration, 651 ARTS - Brooklyn’s premier institution for the African Diasporic performing arts - in association with Downtown Brooklyn Partnership - will once again join forces with the popular outdoor music concert series The Soapbox Presents for the second year to commemorate the now federally-recognized holiday with “**We Outside: A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol II.**” The celebration will include a full day of programming and activities for the entire family and will be held outdoors at The Plaza - 300 Ashland Place in Downtown Brooklyn, on Saturday, June 15th from 2pm – 8pm.

Curated with The Soapbox Presents as part of their Juneteenth activations, this year’s theme for “*We Outside...*” will center around the concept of “Individual Expression” and spotlights the spirit of Black creativity through an expanded programming to feature a series of live performances and experiences throughout the day. Bringing its signature stoop sessions to Downtown Brooklyn, one of the day’s biggest draws will include “The Soapbox Presents: Stoop Sessions, Freedom Songs”, a journey through Black protest music to a party of radical joy to be led by bassist **Endea Owens** and featuring **J. Hoard**. From Jim Crow to systemic oppression, freedom songs have always historically been part of Black identity as a constant throughline in the fight for justice and equality and Stoop Sessions pays tribute to that integral piece of the Black experience.

Additional programming highlights for the day include:

- **The Cypher: Rep Your City** - In this special Juneteenth workshop led by **André Zachery** and a cohort of choreographers, participants are invited to share the stories of their neighborhoods, cities, countries, and cultures through dance. From New York's Litefeet to Chicago's Footwork, Black social dance and movement traditions have always played a pivotal role in shaping African American cultural identity and the variations of these dances tell the stories of the communities from which they were born. The workshop will explore liberation through movement, travelling around the country, using dance as our vehicle and freedom as our fuel.
- **Young, Gifted and Black:** Inspired by HBCU culture, YG&B celebrates the traditions born out of necessity at educational institutions made for African Americans by African Americans and the young people continuing its legacy. This segment will feature marching bands, majorette squads and a step show.
- **Melanated Notes** – This experience will take attendees on a journey through the Black experience using word and rhythm. *Melanated Notes* pairs poets with musicians for an exploration of freedom- the freedom we live and the freedom we aspire to attain.

Additionally, “*We Outside...*” will once again host **Made Black**, a unique Black Artisan Market - curated especially for this event by Brooklyn Pop-Up – showcasing Brooklyn's finest Black makers and entrepreneurs. The marketplace will feature contemporary fashion, accessories, home goods, beauty and wellness and handmade jewelry - all Made Black.

“We're so excited to collaborate with The Soapbox Presents again and to continue to grow our Juneteenth Celebration. The term ‘We Outside’ represents a terminology not only coined by our community but one that represents the very spirit of freedom and exuberance! And in that spirit, this year we wanted to delve deeper into how that manifests itself through Black creativity and individual expression. With that in mind, I think we designed a really special program,” said 651 ARTS' Executive Director **Toya A. Lillard**. “As this is our fourth year commemorating Juneteenth, it is fast becoming a tradition in Brooklyn - one which our patrons are now looking forward to every year. From that first year to this one, we remain committed to ensuring that this event serves as a place of joy, community gathering and building, a catalyst for unity and remembrance of the resilience and perseverance of our people.”

“At The Soapbox Presents, we believe in building coalitions that build community,” said **Marija Abney**, Founder and Executive Director, The Soapbox Presents “So we're thrilled to partner with 651 ARTS once again to bring you a full day of community & cultural programming.”

This year's event location is also especially significant for 651 ARTS as the Juneteenth Celebration will be hosted on The Plaza of the institution's new home at 300 Ashland Place. The move is a milestone in the organization's history and will mark the first time that 651 ARTS will have a permanent space to independently program and operate - allowing it to comprehensively foster artists and cultivate new audiences.

651 ARTS' Juneteenth Celebration is an annual commemoration of African-American liberation, resilience and self-determination featuring performances, panels and community engagement activities that honors the brilliance and vitality of Black culture.

Juneteenth is an annual commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States. Though the Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves was signed January 1, 1863, enslaved African Americans in Galveston Bay, Texas learned of their freedom from the Union Army, June 19, 1865, after the Emancipation Proclamation was announced. Juneteenth is the longest standing African American holiday observed in the United States.

Partners/Collaborators include: Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, Two Trees, Brooklyn Pop Up and Skoolmilk

To RSVP for “**We Outside: A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol II**,” click [HERE](#)
For additional information on 651 ARTS, please visit: 651ARTS.org. For exclusive photos, updates and more, follow us on social: [@651ARTS](#)

ABOUT THE SOAPBOX PRESENTS

The Soapbox Presents is a platform, literally and figuratively, for Black and brown expression. Founded by Marija Abney, in response to the murder of George Floyd, The Soapbox Presents creates a space for us to commune, resist, be rejuvenated and revived as we celebrate the brilliance of Black and brown people through art. Since 2020 we have provided free arts programming to community featuring some of NYC's most talented artists. From Mahogany L. Browne (Lincoln Center's first poet-in-residence) to Sean Mason (arranger, composer, pianist, and featured guest of the Wynton Marsalis Quintet), The Soapbox Presents gives Black and brown artists the opportunity to give back to their communities. And each and every artist featured on our platform gets paid.

We are the recipients of The Mellon Foundation's Humanities in Place grant 2021-2024, in 2021 we were acknowledged by the United Nations for our work in their inaugural International Day of People of African Descent, in 2022 we were celebrated in the “Positively Black” segment on NBC New York, and most recently we received Open Plan's 2023 People's Choice Award for best activator in their first annual Public Space Awards. We've performed at The Apollo, Lincoln Center multiple times, Symphony Space, and Afropunk but most significantly for community on the stoops and sidewalks of New York City. We can be found [@thesoapboxpresents](#) on all social platforms.

ABOUT 651 ARTS

Founded in Brooklyn, NY in 1988, the mission of 651 ARTS is to deepen awareness of and appreciation for contemporary performing arts and culture of the African Diaspora, and to provide professional and creative opportunities for artists of African descent.

651's signature programs have featured pioneering black choreographers from around the world including Germaine Acogny, Nora Chipaumire, Carmen de Lavallade, Diane McIntyre, Bebe Miller, Abdel R. Salaam and Jawole Willo Jo Zollar. As part of its commitment to the furtherance of conversations and celebration of Diaspora music, the institution has presented

dialogues and performances by Somi, Hugh Masekela, and Grammy-winning artist Betty Carter, to name a few. Theatrical and text-based works by Anna Deavere Smith, Sekou Sundiata, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Ntozake Shange, Okwui Okpokwasili and Maria Bauman are representative of the hundreds of artists and productions featuring solo creations, collaborations, emerging artists, and works-in-development all produced by 651's visionary leadership in the field of Black performance.

About Downtown Brooklyn Partnership

Downtown Brooklyn Partnership is a not-for-profit local development corporation that serves as the primary champion for Downtown Brooklyn as a world-class business, cultural, educational, residential, and retail destination. Working together with the three business improvement districts (BID) that it manages – the MetroTech BID, Fulton Mall Improvement Association, and Court-Livingston-Schermerhorn BID – the Partnership's diverse activities include attracting new businesses and improving the environment for existing companies; facilitating the construction of public spaces and streetscapes that promote an active and cohesive community; supporting and promoting Downtown Brooklyn's cultural assets; and encouraging a unified sense of place and an engaged civic community. For more information, visit www.downtownbrooklyn.com.

About The Plaza at 300 Ashland

The Plaza at 300 Ashland sits at the heart of the Brooklyn Cultural District, adjacent to the brownstone Brooklyn neighborhoods of Fort Greene, Boerum Hill, and Park Slope. DBP has partnered with premier Brooklyn arts organizations such as BAM, BRIC, Brooklyn Public Library, Mark Morris Dance Group, MoCADA, 651 ARTS, and Theatre for a New Audience (TFANA) to offer free, high-quality programming for everyone. Programming at The Plaza at 300 Ashland is made possible by support from Two Trees Management Co.

651 ARTS' programs are made possible by gifts from generous individuals and grants from the Altman Foundation, The Bay and Paul Foundations, The Black Seed Fund, Booth Ferris Foundation, Burberry, Con Edison, Doris Duke Foundation, Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, Lambent Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, New York Community Trust Mosaic Network & Fund, and Wallace Foundation. 651 ARTS is supported, in part, by public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in Partnership with the City Council, and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.

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