

Caribbean Communities and Cultures: Preservation and Adaptation

Friday, October 28, 2016, 10am - 4pm

Conference Program Schedule



The presenting scholars, artists and community leaders will cover a wide range of topics including comparative studies of the Caribbean music and dance, historical legacies in present-day traditions, healing practices, food ways and life experiences. Discussions will explore meanings and relevance of Caribbean traditions and cultures in the modern American society.

10am - 12pm, Session 1

10am - 11am

Selina Morales (Philadelphia Folklore Project, Director)
Spiritual Pharmacies: Caribbean Botánicas in the U.S.

11am - 12pm

Robert Ramos (Rutgers University–New Brunswick)
Big Sounds from Small Places: Music of the Caribbean

12pm - 1pm, **Lunch Break**

1pm - 4pm, Session 2

1pm - 2pm

Pascale Boucicaut (Culinary Artist, Philadelphia)
Honoring History and Tradition in the Caribbean Kitchen

2pm - 3pm

Eleanor Castillo-Bullock (GAMAE International, Artistic Director)
Garifuna (Black Carib) History and Cultural Heritage

3pm - 4pm

Retina Grant (Rise Up Children Arts - Camden)
Life as I Know It: Preserving Jamaican Cultural Heritage

ABSTRACTS

Selina Morales (Philadelphia Folklore Project, Director)

Spiritual Pharmacies: Caribbean Botánicas in the U.S.

In the words of Jerusalén Morales-Díaz, former *botánica* owner and espiritista healer, “A *botánica* is a pharmacy for the soul. It is a place where people go to deal with their inner being, to seek remedies that will heal their spirits.” Common in Caribbean neighborhoods in the United States, *botánicas* are stores that sell ritual merchandise necessary for practicing a variety of traditional belief systems. From love potions, lucky pennies and statues of Catholic saints to fresh herbs and spiritual consultations, the *botánica* offers an alternative health resource to its community. At the center of a *botánica* are strong faith based relationships that are nourished and encouraged through the products sold in the store. In this presentation, folklorist Selina Morales will discuss her ethnographic research about *botánicas*. Her presentation will include family stories set in a *botánica* her grandmother operated in the South Bronx during the 1980s and will draw on her 10+ years of research about *botánicas* in New York City and Jersey City.

Robert Ramos (Rutgers University–New Brunswick)

Big Sounds from Small Places: Music of the Caribbean

Such a large number of folkloric and popular styles of music come from such a disproportionately small area - the region of the Caribbean. Why is that? Professor Ramos will be your guide on a small sonic tour of the islands that have created the World's most cherished music. From Haitian Folk and Twoubadou to the Danzon, Mambo, Cha cha cha and Rumba of Cuba, from Jamaican Folk to Jamaican Ska, Reggae, and Dance Hall, from Dominican Merengue to Trinidadian Calypso and Steel Pan, to pan-Caribbean styles such as Reggaeton and pan-Caribbean cultural expressions such as Carnival - we will explore some history, compare stylistic similarities and differences, and maybe get a hand on a drum!

Pascale Boucicaut (Culinary Artist, Philadelphia)

Honoring History and Tradition in the Caribbean Kitchen

Caribbean cooking offers a unique glimpse into the ways in which history, ritual, and everyday life intersect. My presentation will highlight important recipes from different Caribbean countries, the stories behind their origins, and the rich cultural traditions they represent. We will look at specific dishes that emerged out of struggles for liberation and are now symbols of national identity in Haiti and Jamaica. We will also explore examples of ingredients and herb seasoning blends, which represent the Caribbean more widely, and which are the historical and contemporary backbone of our regional cuisines.

Eleanor Castillo-Bullock (GAMAE International, Artistic Director)

Garifuna (Black Carib) History and Cultural Heritage

The presentation will provide a vivid discussion on the history and culture of the Garifuna people. The story of the Black Caribs (Garifuna), which begins on the islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, will be revealed in the context of their struggle with the British and later on existence as a minority culture in other countries. The presenter will also discuss the Garifuna community in the U.S. and the various programs aiming at safeguarding Garifuna language, spirituality, art, music and dance. Mrs. Bullock will also invite audience participation in presenting traditional Garifuna chants and songs.

Retina Grant (Rise Up Children - Camden)

Life as I Know It: Preserving Jamaican Cultural Heritage

Retina Grant's talk explores her early years growing up in rural St. Mary, Jamaica, particularly as these years intersect with major Caribbean and world events, such as World War II, Hurricane Charlie in 1951, and the political climate of the country before it gained independence in 1962. Her talk will cover a range of topics, from education and agriculture to Jamaican sayings and cultural life. A blend of personal remembrance and historical reflection, her story teaches the value of family, preserving of cultural heritage and faith and is delivered with a mixture of humor and wisdom that is simultaneously educational and heart-warming.

PRESENTERS

Selina Morales

Selina Morales is the Director of the Philadelphia Folklore Project (PFP), where she tends the folk arts and social justice mission of the organization and develops innovative programming. Selina completed her M.A. in Folklore at Indiana University and holds a B.A. in Anthropology from Oberlin College. She currently teaches in the Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability program at Goucher College. In 2009, Selina served as a guest curator at the Mathers Museum of World Cultures where she created *Botánica: A Pharmacy for the Soul*, an innovative installation drawing on a 163-piece ethnographic collection documenting *botánicas* in the United States. Selina has been an invited speaker in University and community settings on social justice and folklore, Latino folklore, folklore and education and other topics. Areas of expertise include: Urban folklore, folk healing and belief, public folklore theory and practice, and exhibition design.

Robert Ramos

Professor Ramos is a musicologist from the Rutgers Graduate School and Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. He has been the instructor of the "Music in the Caribbean" course for the Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies department since 2009. Sponsored by the Center for Latino Arts and Culture, he managed and performed with the Rutgers Salsa Band in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. A drummer and percussionist, he currently performs and records in various musical styles, and teaches group and private music lessons, as well as his college classes in the Tri-state area.

Pascale Boucicaut

Pascale Boucicaut is a culinary artist based in Philadelphia. Her work focuses on resuscitating traditional cooking methods and ingredients that are endangered or already obsolete. Currently, Pascale is working on Dishes of the Diaspora, a documented exploration of African Heritage foodways in Philadelphia, on display at the Philadelphia Folklore Project. She is also the co-founder of Paloma, a Caribbean supper club. Previously, she worked as a chef and restaurateur in Bastimentos, Panama and New York City.

Eleanor Castillo-Bullock

Eleanor Castillo-Bullock is the Artistic Director of GAMAE International who is committed to the preserving the Garifuna history, cultural heritage and language through the performing arts venue. Eleanor Castillo-Bullock is a vocalist, choreographer and Garifuna language translator. Eleanor initiated a full scope multi-generational program with an Ensemble featuring some of the best traditional Garifuna music and songs presenting various Garifuna traditions from St. Vincent, the Grenadines and Belize. Eleanor holds a Masters in Arts in Liberal Studies (M.A.L.S.-2008) and a Masters Degree in Public Affairs and Administration (M.P.A.-2009) from Rutgers University, a Bachelors degree in Visual and Performing Arts from Syracuse University, and an Associate Degree from New York City Technical College.

Retina Grant

Born June 3, 1933 on the Island of Jamaica, Parish of Saint Mary, in the District of Clonmel. Attended the Clonmel Elementary School Junior A thru Upper 6 Class. Mrs. Grant migrated in the United States in 1992. Career paths include, working in garment factories, housekeeping and nursing care. Mrs. Grant has two children, seven grandchildren, six great-grandchildren that all live here in the United States. She is retired and lives with her family. She is an active member at St. Matthews United Methodist Church. She enjoys teaching Sunday School, crocheting, reading, sewing and cooking. Mrs. Grant is affiliated with Rise Up Children Arts, an organization that supports literacy projects through various art forms.