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R i c h m o n d , V i r g i n i a

Elegba Folklore Society, Inc.

Richmond's Cultural Ambassador

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www.efslnc.org

Official Press Kit

Details: Janine Bell
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Fact Sheet

WHEN Saturday, August 17 • 4p - 11p, Free.

WHERE Abner Clay Park, 200 E Clay St, Richmond, Virginia.

WHO A Family Festival Open to the Public.

Presented by Elegba Folklore Society, Inc.

Richmond's Cultural Ambassador

In Partnership With: City of Richmond, Dominion Energy, Wells Fargo, BLK RVA, Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities, NBC12, Bounce Richmond, The CW Richmond and United Nations' 2015 – 2024 International Decade for People of African Descent and State of the African Diaspora.
Additional Support: CultureWorks' Arts & Cultural Funding Consortium - Richmond, Henrico, Hanover

WHAT A Celebration of African American Folklife. **Returning for its Thirty-Third Year**, this Weekend Event shares global African cultural influences with An All-Star Line-Up of World Music, Entertainment and Material Culture Traditions.

FEATURES **On the Zeke Allison Main Stage:** The Legendary, **New Birth Legacy**, Cotonou Bénin's **Jah Baba**, Reggae with **Wildfire**, Socially Conscious Go-Go with **Crank LuKongo**, **Kevin Davis and Ban Caribe** and Richmond favorite, **Legacy Band**.

In the Park: Interactive Folkloric Demonstrations, The Juanita Ragland Heritage Market, Delicious Down Home Food, Annie Tyler Children's Place and the Waverly Crawley Community Row.

ALERTS Please scroll to page 6 for details about do's and don'ts, parking, shuttles, drop off and pick up locations.

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33rd Down Home Family Reunion/333

Details: Janine Bell
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ELEGBA FOLKLORE SOCIETY PRESENTS 33rd DOWN HOME FAMILY REUNION, A CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FOLK LIFE

RICHMOND, VA • The *33rd Down Home Family Reunion* explores a full spectrum of music, dance, stories, food, shopping and enrichment in this weekend **Celebration of African American Folklife**. Elegba Folklore Society, Richmond's Cultural Ambassador, presents this cultural arts festival that takes attendees on a journey of heritage and folklore from West Africa into the Americas.

On **Saturday, August 17**, the *33rd Down Home Family Reunion* will happen, **4:00 - 11:00 p.m.**, downtown in **Historic Jackson Ward's Abner Clay Park, 200 W Clay Street**. Elegba Folklore Society invites Virginians and visitors back to this event designed to link West African and African American cultural traditions and to demonstrate ways these practices have influenced the American South.

The *33rd Down Home Family Reunion, A Celebration of African American Folklife* is presented by the Elegba Folklore Society, Inc., Richmond's Cultural Ambassador in partnership with the City of Richmond, Dominion Energy, Wells Fargo, Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities, NBC12, Bounce Richmond, The CW Richmond, BLK RVA and internationally, United Nations' 2015 – 2024 International Decade for People of African Descent. Additional support is provided through the CultureWorks' Arts & Cultural Funding Consortium - Richmond, Henrico, Hanover.

Attendees can be a part of **Bringing the World Home** in this Celebration of African American Folklife — a celebration of culture, a celebration of heritage, a celebration of the soul.

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33rd Down Home Family Reunion/444

The influences of Africans and African Americans on the fabric of America interweaves endless impact that has shaped our world in the sciences, in design, in mathematics, in literature and all forms of the arts, in athletics, in foodways traditions, politics, social change, education and more. America would not recognize itself otherwise. In **Bringing the World Home** we see ourselves more clearly here and in a global community.

New Birth headlines this year's event. This *Legacy* band invites attendees to take a walk down memory lane with the platinum sounds that originated in and come to the **33rd Down Home Family Reunion** from Detroit. **New Birth** was conceived by former Motown songwriters and producers, Vernon Bullock, Harvey Fuqua and music industry veteran Tony Churchill. While some of the original members have ascended to the realm of the Ancestors, remaining long-timers and and newer Detroit natives ensure that the *Legacy* lives on.

Richmond has an historical relationship with Bénin, West Africa via the Trans-Atlantic trade of Africans enslaved and bound for the Americas. Richmond was a destination for some of the peoples of Bénin, then Dahomey. As we learn more about how we got to where we are, drawing these cultural connections is the reason for the **Down Home Family Reunion, A Celebration of African American Folklife** and the possibilities to come. Accordingly, Elegba Folklore Society welcomes **Jah Baba** to its stage, an internationally recognized Béninese musical ensemble and cultural advocate. Led by Oladikpo Abiala singer, multi-instrumentalist, producer, composer and bandleader, known for his innovative blend of traditional West African drumming with jazz, juju, Afrobeat and reggae, he is a master of the Bata and gangan (dun-dun) drums, as well as the Yoruba Oro and Gèlèdè masquerade traditions of his native region. His original compositions are deeply rooted in his rich cultural heritage and sometimes infuse the traditional rhythms with jazz improvisation. In family, Abiala's grandmother, Oyin Ade, encouraged him to pursue music as a form of social justice and cultural activism. He is an arts educator who owns and operates Africa Sound City, a performance venue, recording studio and classroom where he trains youth and cultivates the next generation of Béninese artists. He has given master classes and workshops for the Global Jazz Summit at the Berkeley College of Music and a collaborative educational performance at Harvard University. Shortly thereafter, the United States Embassy in Cotonou designated Jam Baba a liaison for intercultural exchanges and performances. Oladipo Abiala says of **Jah Baba**, "My songs essentially speak about the need for a rise in African consciousness. People recognize themselves in my music."

33rd Down Home Family Reunion/555

Crank - DC Vernacular meaning generating energy

LuKongo - Kikongo word meaning liberation

The Washington, DC-based **Crank LuKongo** will appear on the festival's main stage, bringing their self-termed genre, *Afro-GoGo Roots* layered with lyrics classified as protest and socially conscious reflecting the true history and current status of our environment. **Crank LuKongo** was conceived, produced, and directed in Washington, DC by percussionist, drummer, vocalist, songwriter, and actor, Matt "Swamp Guinee" Miller. Miller has performed with artists from the Legendary Wailers to Bebe Winans to Sheryl Lee Ralph and Malik Yoba, among others. In 2019, **Crank LuKongo**, was nominated for a WAMMIE Award in 2 categories for Best Go-Go Album, and Best Go-Go Artist/Group. With a strong foundation rooted in DC Go-Go music, the mission and purpose of **Crank LuKongo** is to assert cultural awareness and social activism for the love of humanity, sharing the historical anthropology of the Nation's Capital and its surrounding region to the global community and throughout the diaspora.

Rooted in Senegal from the blood of the Mandinka to the shores of North America, **Wildfire** is a reggae artist, songwriter and producer. He founded and teaches music, with a focus on guitar, and music production at TCC Pro Academy where there is also a recording studio. He will sing about peace, love and African awareness through the inspiration of reggae music.

Presenting its own brand, "Clavé Soul," a marriage of Afro- Cuban music with other Caribbean influences, rhythm & blues and Afro-pop, **Kevin Davis and Ban Caribe** set original compositions and musical interpretations to the clavé rhythm pattern replacing the traditional drum set with the Latin percussion ensemble of timbales, congas, bongos, maracas and clavés. The guitar chords and harmonic vocals provide the soul, offering a smooth groove. Says Davis, "Rhythm is connected to my spirit. Music is a part of my heritage, soul, heartbeat and blood." The band easily invites the audience into this intimacy for listening and dancing.

The **Zeke Allison Main Stage** opens up with Richmond-based **Legacy Band**. Performing all over the City of Richmond for 9 years, **Legacy Band's** sound is a combination of soul, R&B, Funk and Jazz all mixed into one. **Legacy Band** brings forth a refreshing sound while paying tribute to the greats.

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33rd Down Home Family Reunion/6

People **in the park** will revisit and participate in a variety of cultural traditions. As a highlight of the **33rd Down Home Family Reunion**, attendees will have the chance to participate in three **Interactive Folkloric Demonstrations**. Attendees can visit **Professor Pop Culture** and get immersed in **Black Musicology**, they can explore revolutionary urban gardening with **Happily Natural Day** or they can visit **9 Million African American Ancestral Altars Strong** to find inspiration for spiritual healing and ancestral veneration in the homes.

Events for children and teens are focused in the **Annie Tyler Children's Place**, where participants can showcase their performing talents and create a craft in recognition of the **32nd Down Home Family Reunion's** theme, **Bringing the World Home**. Plus, there will be games, contests and more.

A captivating **Juanita Ragland Heritage Market** will offer an assortment of art, hand-mades and imports for browsing and purchase. Community service providers will inform from the **Waverly Crawley Community Row**.

Food is a familiar way to continue the celebration of shared traditions, and it continues to be a centerpiece for the **33rd Down Home Family Reunion, A Celebration of African American Folklife**. This year's menus will feature entrées and mouth-watering desserts that are African-inspired and Southern favorites.

ATTENTION

33rd Down Home Family Reunion will place signage to lead attendees to convenient parking and satellite parking. Attendees should not park on residential streets where time-based ticketing and towing is enforced. Attendees are encouraged to visit www.efsinc.org for parking updates and shuttle schedules. While the festival disallows attendees to bring coolers or animals, there will be two tent villages for personal pop-ups and a drop off and pick up point in front of the park at 200 W Clay St, W Clay and Brook Road, for those who need it.

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33rd Down Home Family Reunion/777

33RD DOWN HOME FAMILY REUNION EVENT SCHEDULE

Zeke Allison Main Stage

- 4:15 Legacy Band**
R&B, Funk
- 5:30 Crank LuKongo**
Socially Conscious Go-Go
- 6:35 Kevin Davis & Ban Caribe**
Clavé Soul
- 7:35 Wildfire**
Reggae
- 8:45 Jah Baba**
West African JuJu, Afrobeat Blend
- 10:00 New Birth *Legacy***
R&B
- 11:00 Event Closes**

Annie Tyler Children's Place • Open from **4:00p - 8:00p**

Juanita Ragland Heritage Market • Ongoing from **4:00p - 11:00p**

Waverly Crawley Community Row • Ongoing from **4:00p - 11:00p**

Interactive Folkloric Demonstrations • Ongoing from **4:00p - 11:00p**

Elegba Folklore Society is a widely recognized, not-for-profit organization that offers services in cultural arts programming and education. In addition to planning special events, services include organizing exhibitions of visual art and material culture, presenting performance and teaching programs in dance theatre and music and guiding cultural history tours. This group created the ***Down Home Family Reunion, A Celebration of African American Folklife*** and has produced it annually (minus 2020) since its inception.

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33rd Down Home Family Reunion/888

Elegba -- eh LEHG bah -- is the name given to the Orisha --ohr• REE• shah-- (an intercessor or aspect of nature) who, in the Yoruba --YOUR• ruh• bah tradition of West Africa, is a gatekeeper. He opens the roads to bring clarity out of confusion. Through its various services, the Elegba Folklore Society hopes to provide road-opening experiences for its audiences. Janine Yvette Bell is the society's founder and artistic director.

Elegba Folklore Society is Richmond's Cultural Ambassador

Embrace the spirit!

For more information, the public can call the Elegba Folklore Society at 804/644-3900, email story1@efsinc.org, log on to www.efsinc.org and find Elegba Folklore Society on Facebook or Instagram (@efsinc).

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