



DEBAJO DEL LAUREL: A CELEBRATION FOR CHANGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jadele McPherson

Email: lukumiarts@gmail.com

Phone: 540.353.4351

<http://www.lukumiart.com>

<http://www.facebook.com/lukumi.arts>

New York, NY - EVENT INFORMATION

Debajo del Laurel is a performance art piece that integrates Afro-Cuban palo, Arará, rumba and orisha into a musical, dance-filled show questioning silences in violence in the legacy and memory of Afrodescendants in our hemisphere. Traveling between a coffee plantation in Cuba's Oriente (East) and/or cotton plantation (Mississippi) a women finds reconcile and spiritual growth by traveling through the life of her grandmothers after a tragedy. She is guided by the force of (social) justice, morality, law, masculinity and the drum deity Shangó (Changó).

This is an original theater piece with special invited Afro-Cuban guest artist **Marisol Blanco (Miami, FL) founder and artistic director of Sikan Afro-Cuban Dance Project** that explores contemporary questions of legacy, power and spirituality in Afro-Cuban, Caribbean and American Afro-Atlantic communities interweaving live performance, movement and text. **Our cast/ensemble features: Yomaira Mella, Ayelouwa Taylor, Marisol Blanco, Erin Washington, Debbie Garcia, Anese Jackson & Jadele McPherson. Directed by Maya James. Stage Manager, Stacy Tiele.** LukumiArts has also launched our first 30-Day Kickstarter Campaign to raise \$2500 for this event ending Dec.16th 2013:

<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/27272169/debajo-del-laurel-a-celebration-for-chango>

We will present the piece **Saturday, December 14th, 2013 at TEATRO LATEA/Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center, 107 Suffolk St. New York, NY 10002 at 7pm. Tickets are \$12/in advance, \$15/door on Eventbrite:**

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/debajo-del-laurel-a-celebration-for-chango-tickets-9368233639?aff=es2&rank=46&>.



Lukumi Arts is an interdisciplinary arts collective dedicated to creating innovative projects. Founded (January 2008) as an open and growing collective of artists, orisha/palo priests and practitioners, singers, dancers, percussionists, MCs, and producers; we narrate stories that reflect the history, struggles, perseverance and beauty of our community. Amidst a negative array of stereotypes, images and misinformation about Afro-Cuban religions and culture, we communicate the positive, empowering nature of Afro-Cuban traditions through the arts.

CREATIVE TEAM ARTIST BIOS



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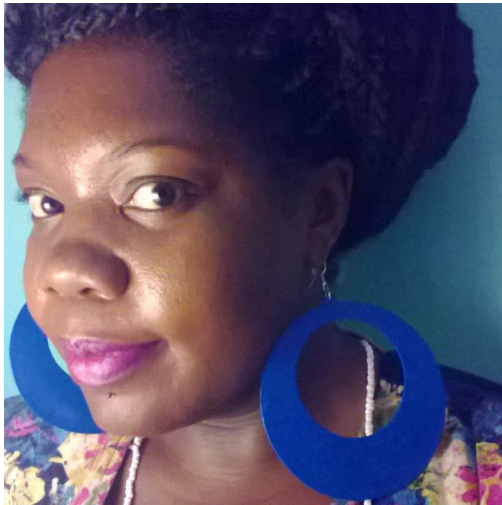
Jadele McPherson, (MA UChicago) is a performance artist, singer, actress, scholar, and cultural organizer. McPherson has presented performance & scholarship at the ADRSA and KOSANBA Conferences at Harvard University (2013). She was in the original cast of PARTY PEOPLE at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's 2012 season and an ensemble member of UNIVERSES. After completing the EMERGENYC program at NYU her final performance was entitled WaterRain using altar space transformation, song and movement to bring sound narrative alive about the effects of the Japanese tsunami on the earth which she

impersonates using Afro-Cuban orishas, or divine expressions of natural elements. Infusing Afro-Cuban genres into interdisciplinary arts projects, as a teacher and performer she is committed to Afro-Latin@ arts education, community building, and traditional arts as a healing response to trauma and division in multicultural communities.



Marisol Blanco began studying folkloric Afro-Cuban dance when she was 8 years old. She studied dance (specializing in folkloric dance) at the prestigious Institute Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba and later was a dance teacher/choreographer at the Escuela Nacional de Arte. Marisol was also a dancer and percussionist with Obbini Bata, Cuba's first all-female dance and percussion group, performing in Havana's most famous venues. In 2008,

Marisol left Cuba for Miami, Florida and began teaching Afro-Cuban dance classes as well as performing with various groups as well as for TV shows like Cubana Television. She has performed with Miami's most renowned folkloric music and dance groups including Ife-Ife and Los Herederos, as well as for the Brazilian group Mano Santa. Marisol has also led workshops for national dance conferences -- including the National Salsa Congress, the National Zumba Convention, in Atlanta and at Duke University.



DIRECTOR Maya James daughter to the Atlantic Ocean, washed ashore on the asphalt of Baltimore City, is a poet, playwright, fiction writer, and actress. Every since she was a little girl, old women would sidle up beside her smelling like hard work and peppermints, needing to unload their troubles, prayers, and blessings on an unbiased ear. Their early gifts inspired that little bookish girl to pursue the writer's life. Ms. James' poetry/fiction has been published in Drum Voices Revue, the Minneapolis Liberator, and she is a fellow of the Callaloo

writing workshops out of Texas A&M Univ. Ms. James is also a first place winner of the College Language Association's Short Story Competition; winner of the Dr. Floyd Gaffney National Playwriting Competition at the Univ. of California, San Diego; and recipient of Howard University's Owen Dobson Award for Dramatic Writing.