

The Pan African Festival – Grand Opening on Friday 28th July

Welcome to the Lidj Yasu Omowale Emancipation Village.

The tradition of the five-day celebration that leads to Emancipation Day begins on July 28 this year. Hosted by the Emancipation Support Committee which marks its milestone 25th anniversary, celebrations begin with the opening of the Lidj Yasu Omowale Emancipation Village. Located at the Queen's Park Savannah, the village is the centre stage for cultural performances as well as a shopping district for all things Afro-centric. Fashion, art, jewelry, furniture and food will be available there.

The Emancipation Village is named after a brother of the Emancipation efforts. A former schoolmate and close friend of ESC chairman Khafra Kambon, Omowale was also integral in having the Columbus Day holiday replaced by Emancipation Day. The village is named after his efforts, a memorial to his contribution to the African identity in Trinidad and Tobago.



On July 28, the Astor Johnson Dance Company will perform. Terri Lyons, Freetown Collective, Bevon St Clair, Nihilet Blackman, San Juan Government Secondary are also on the opening night line-up.

There are two concerts scheduled on July 29. Rhythms and Voices of Africa will begin at 2pm and feature African drumology, songs retained from Africa, folk songs, calypso, dance and steelpan. At 8pm, the Youth Concert will take place. Among the artistes to perform then are Kushite, Butcha, Jah Melody, King David, Carter, Zion Starr, Jahz Blaze, Orlando Octave, Gardah Knight, Kreemmyy and Woleta Eyesuys.

July 30 will be a full day of activities. Starting with the Food Fair and Family Day from 10am. Those looking for a different type of Sunday lunch can visit to sample continental African dishes prepared by African nationals and local cooks. Youth Steel Explosion takes place from 2pm and will be followed by Jazz at Sunset at 6pm. Hosting the sundown session will be Moresha Ransome. Musicians featured are The Moore Family, Akinola Sinnon and Cousoumeh.

On the eve of the holiday, Youth Day at the village will entail creative and learning workshops for the young participants. Stilt walking, African dance, theatre and drama, storytelling, rapso, art and craft, drumming and instrument making are some of the workshops available. During the day, but away from the Village, a business symposium discussing means to enhance the transatlantic trade between Trinidad and Africa will take place at Hilton Trinidad. The day will culminate with a powerful concert featuring Awa Sangho of Mali. The concert, dedicated to former Calypso Monarch Singing Sandra, will also have a cast of local artistes.

On August 1, Emancipation Day, a drum call and performance of Freedom Morning Come begins the celebration from 4am at Treasury Building, Port of Spain. Kabule, the beloved procession celebrating African ancestry, begins at 8am, moving off from the Brian Lara Promenade and end at the Village. From noon to 8pm, there will be cultural presentations.

For further information about the events, please follow the ESC's Facebook page or its website.