THE 7TH ANNUAL
WORLD REFUGEE DAY
COMMUNITY ARTS FESTIVAL

Brooklyn Conservatory of Music

JUNE 18, 2023 • 3PM
ARTWORK BY ALEX HLIV
Welcome to the 7th Annual World Refugee Day Community Arts Festival!

Welcome to the 7th Annual World Refugee Day Community Arts Festival! This event is a free celebration open to all in our community. Today's program will feature refugee performers and performances intended to highlight the experiences of refugees, immigrants, forcibly displaced persons, and asylum seekers. The afternoon will showcase music, dance, theater and more.

In addition to artists, we are hosting representatives from critical organizations that resettle and support refugees in NYC and beyond. We welcome you to enjoy the show and to learn more about the work of our vital partner organizations.

Don't forget to visit our garden where we are hosting vendors from many countries with beautiful wares to buy!
World Refugee Day 2023
Performance Schedule

Lincoln Street Stage – MC Violeta Caldeira
3 – 4pm
ALSARPA – Colombian Folklore
Zoya Tatarinova – Classical Singing
People's Theater Project – Theater
Garifuna Women – Presenting Traditional Dress
ALSARPA – Latin Dance
Alla and Raisa Rodina – Opera & Classical Violin

4 – 4:30pm
Nikkiesha McLeod – Spoken Word Poetry
Maksim Mitrofanov – Saxophone
Achiro P Olwoch – Excerpt for her book "My War Song"

Speech by Commissioner Castro of MOIA

4:30 – 5:30pm
Megumi Saruhashi Quintet
Marthe Kiemde – Poetry
Eduard Sidorov & Mercury – Voice & Drag

5:30–6pm
Nataly Aukar – Comedy

7th Ave Stage
3pm Hancy Michaud – Congas
3:30pm Viktoriia Viennikova– Voice
4pm The Square Theater – Interactive theater
5pm Xavier Mujica – Voice
5:30pm Los Guedeses – Afro-Caribbean Percussion

THANK YOU TO THE MAYOR’S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THE WORLD REFUGEE DAY COMMUNITY ARTS FESTIVAL FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS.
SPECIAL THANKS TO: RED CROSS, RAZOM FOR UKRAINE, QUALITAS OF LIFE, WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM’S GLOBAL SHAPERS COMMUNITY, AND HER MIGRANT HUB.
Sponsor Bios

**Brooklyn Conservatory of Music** (BKCM) reaches thousands of students every year with no-cost music education and music therapy brought directly to public schools, senior centers, community centers and more. With your donation, we can continue to bring accessible music education and music therapy to communities in all five boroughs.

**Accompany Capital** creates a pathway to prosperity for New York area immigrant, refugee, and underserved entrepreneurs, supporting them as they launch and grow their businesses with access to affordable credit, financial education, training in technology, and best business practices.

**Business Outreach Center Network’s** mission is to improve the economic prospects of traditionally underserved groups, with a focus on low- and moderate-income entrepreneurs and their communities.

**The Brave House** is a community of support for young immigrant women and gender-expansive youth, ages 16-24, in New York City, with a focus on those who are survivors of gender-based violence.

**CAMBA** is a non-profit agency that provides services that connect people with opportunities to enhance their quality of life.
Sponsor Bios

**Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York** helps solve the problems of New Yorkers in need, non-Catholics and Catholics alike. The neglected child, the homeless family, the immigrant and refugee, the person with special needs, and the hungry senior are among those for whom we provide help and create hope – with compassion and respect.

**Commonpoint Queens** is dedicated to sustaining and enhancing the quality of individual, family and communal life throughout Queens, through services to people of all ages, ability levels, stages of life and backgrounds.

**Church World Service (CWS)** works with partners in the U.S. and around the world to build interfaith and intercultural coalitions to eradicate hunger and poverty and promote peace and justice. CWS supports sustainable grassroots development, disaster relief, and refugee assistance. In the United States, CWS helps communities respond to disasters, resettles refugees, promotes fair national and international policies, and provides educational resources. CWS New York provides immigration legal services to underserved populations throughout the tri-state area.
HIAS is the world’s oldest refugee agency. Though the organization was formally established as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society in 1902, that founding moment represented a continuation of several predecessor organizations that had worked through the 1880s and 1890s to assist Jews fleeing pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe. While those arriving in the United States at that time were refugees, the world did not yet have a legal concept for people who needed safe refuge outside their homelands. Originally set up by Jews to help fellow Jews for reasons of religious imperative and communal solidarity, HIAS in the 2020s is a multi-continent, multi-pronged humanitarian aid and advocacy organization with thousands of employees dedicated to helping forcibly displaced persons around the world in keeping with the organization’s Jewish ethical roots.

International Rescue Committee provides opportunities for refugees, asylees, victims of human trafficking, survivors of torture, and other immigrants to thrive in America. Each year, thousands of people, forced to flee violence and persecution, are welcomed by the people of the United States into the safety and freedom of America. These individuals have survived against incredible odds. The IRC works with government bodies, civil society actors, and local volunteers to help them translate their past experiences into assets that are valuable to their new communities. In New York and other offices across the country, the IRC helps them to rebuild their lives.

Libertas Center for Human Rights, located at Elmhurst Hospital in Queens, provides survivors of torture and human rights violations in the New York City area with comprehensive medical, mental health, social, and legal services to help clients regain function and lead healthy, confident, and hopeful lives.
Queer Detainee Empowerment Project (QDEP) assists folks coming out of immigration detention in securing structural, health/wellness, educational, legal, and emotional support and services. We work to organize around the structural barriers and state violence that LGBTQIA TS & GNC detainee/undocumented folks face related to their immigration status, race, sexuality, and gender expression and identity. We are committed to assisting folks in building lives outside of detention, to breaking down the barriers that prevent folks from building fulfilling and productive lives, and to keeping queer families intact by demanding an end to deportations, detention, and policing. We believe in creating a narrative of thriving, not just surviving.

Ruth’s Refuge provides home furnishings and essentials to refugees, asylees and asylum seekers in New York City.

Refugee Translation Project is a non-profit dedicated to helping refugees transition to a life of safety and security by providing free translation services to people seeking asylum and other immigration relief, increasing access to vital resources, and offering employment opportunities to refugees.

Refugee Congress is a national nonpartisan organization built and led by former refugees, asylum-seekers, and other vulnerable migrants to promote the wellbeing and dignity of all vulnerable migrants. With members in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, members use their voices and experiences to inform and influence decision-makers on critical issues that affect their communities.
**Sponsor Bios**

**The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC)** is an umbrella policy & advocacy organization that represents over 200 immigrant and refugee rights groups throughout New York. The NYIC serves one of the largest and most diverse newcomer populations in the United States. The multi-racial and multi-sector NYIC membership base includes grassroots and nonprofit community organizations, religious and academic institutions, labor unions, as well as legal and socioeconomic justice organizations. The NYIC not only establishes a forum for immigrant groups to voice their concerns, but also provides a platform for collective action to drive positive social change.

**RUSA LGBTQ+** is a network for Russian-speaking LGBTQ+ individuals, their friends, supporters and loved ones. RUSA LGBTQ+ has welcomed many LGBTQ+ asylum seekers from Kazakhstan, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and other countries of the former Soviet Union.

**Brooklyn Public Library** is among the borough’s most democratic civic institutions, serving patrons in every neighborhood and from every walk of life. Established in 1896, BPL is one of the nation’s largest public library systems and currently has more than 850,000 active cardholders. With a branch library within a half-mile of the majority of Brooklyn’s 2.7 million residents, BPL is a recognized leader in cultural offerings, literacy, out-of-school-time services, workforce development programs, and digital literacy. In a borough of wide economic disparity, where the costs of basic necessities often take priority over spending on cultural enrichment opportunities, BPL provides a democratic space where patrons of all economic standings can avail themselves and their children of cultural and educational programs in a broad range of disciplines.
Sponsor Bios

The **NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA)** work recognizes that immigrant New Yorkers and their children make up a significant proportion of the City's population.

Their charter-mandated responsibilities include advising and assisting the mayor, council, and other agencies on programs and policies related to and designed for immigrant New Yorkers; tracking state and federal policy and law that will impact immigrant New Yorkers; increasing access to city programs, benefits, and services by conducting outreach; and helping advise on the legal service needs of immigrants.

MOIA is also required to consult with the community and other stakeholders and coordinate an interagency task force on immigrant affairs. MOIA is also tasked to work with the relevant city agencies to address the needs of immigrant crime victims and witnesses, including by working with agencies on the issuance of U visa certifications and T visa declarations.
Alla Rodina & Raisa Rodina - Alla Rodina (soprano) was born in Kyiv, Ukraine. In 2001, she graduated from A.V. Nezhdanova Odessa National Academy of Music in the class of opera singing (professor O. Stakhovskaya) and chamber singing (professor T. Knyshova). She is a laureate of the 4th International Solomiya Krushelnytska Opera Singers Competition (Lviv, Ukraine, 2009) and others. Rodina has performed as a soloist with the Odessa Philharmonic (2002-2003) and with the National Opera of Ukraine, where made her debut with the opera “La Traviata” (2005-2018). She has also been a guest soloist of the Kazan Opera since 2019 and an invited soloist of the Lviv National Opera (2007-2012). Her favorite roles in operas include Violetta, Abigail, and Aida (Verdi “La Traviata”, “Nabucco”, “Aida”), Lucia (Donizetti “Lucia di Lammermoor”), Marfa (Rymbsky-Korsakov “The Tsar’s Bride”), Michaela (Bizet “Carmen”), Liu, Mimi (Puccini “Turandot”, “Bohème”), and Elsa (Wagner “Lohengrin”).

Rodina has worked with conductors Marco Boemi, Vladimir Spivakov, Roman Kofman, and Oksana Lyniv and has participated in many international music festivals, including Solomiya Krushelnytska (Lviv), Sacred Music in France (Marseille, La Chaise-Dieu), named after F. Chaliapin (Russia, Kazan), and Theater and Music Festival (Vilts, Luxembourg). She has performed concerts and opera tours in Germany, France, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Russia, Japan, and Estonia, and she has been awarded with an honorary certificate of the mayor of the city of Odessa for significant contribution to art and a diploma from the international academy “Golden Fortune” and a medal “The National Opera of Ukraine – 150 years” (2017). Since 2018, Rodina has been working as a vocal teacher at KLSML (Kyiv Lysenko State Music Lyceum). Among the students are laureates of International and all-Ukrainian competitions. She has been a jury member of the X International Academic Vocal Competition “Premier” (2021) and the International Music Festival-Competition “ART&MORE” (2020, 2021).
Performers Bios

**Raisa Rodina** (violin) was born in 2010 in Kyiv, Ukraine. In 2016 she began to study the violin. From 2016-2022, she studied at Kyiv Lysenko State Music Lyceum (Specialized Music School). She is a laureate of Ukrainian Music Competitions in violin and chamber ensemble. Since 2023, Raisa has been a student of Special Music School in Kaufman Music Center–New York, in the violin class of Professor Viktor Basis.

**ALSARPA** is a family of professional dancers. Husband and wife Alexander Reyes and Paula Rivera have been dancing together since they started dating. When they had their first daughter, Sarah, they began guiding her on the same artistic path. A few years ago, they started dancing together as a family. They will perform Colombian Folklore dance and Latin dance.

**Achiro P. Olwoch** is a writer, playwright and screenwriter from Uganda currently living in exile in New York. She tells stories that start conversations. She lives to write and writes to live even though she started off as an airhostess despite being terrified of flying. Achiro will be reading from her book “My War Song - Exile and the War in Northern Uganda.”

**Hancy Michaud**, born in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, is a well-known congas player, and a sound engineer. The conga plays an important role in Haitian culture. The rhythms remind us of slavery, the battlefield, and sound of revolution. As a teenager, he developed a passion for congas. He practiced and developed his skills on the conga and started studying with a drum teacher from Cuba who introduced him to Afro-Cuban drumming. Hancy performed with bands and artists, and he also shared his talent with different dance schools and churches. Hancy is highly detail-oriented and dedicated live sound engineer with significant experience in sound production in Caribbean music. Top-level facility with all state-of-the-art musical production equipment. He worked with producers and clients to determine goals for recordings and provided needed sound quality. He mixed and edited sound recordings. He received the jazz festival sound engineer appreciation award in Montreal, Canada in 2013. His goal is to inspire a new generation of students to discover what genres and styles they are most passionate about learning to play on the conga. He wants to bring love and unity with his talents to the communities he serves.
**Performers Bios**

**Karol Alvarez** is a woman from the Garífuna community of Honduras. She has been in New York for six years where she applied for asylum. She wants to have a better future for herself, her children and her community; therefore, she is an activist woman who helps other Garífuna women to know their rights and the ways they can improve their life conditions.

**Belinda David** is a Garífuna woman from Honduras. She came to New York with her family to seek asylum. In Honduras she was working as a community leader to protect their territory. Nowadays, she is also a leader in New York and supper other indigenous women to have a life with dignity.

**Marthe Kiemde**, who joins us from Her Migrant Hub, will be sharing a poem with audiences at WRD 2023. Her Migrant Hub is an initiative funded by Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, and started by a team of women activists with lived experiences of forced migration living in New York City; social work graduate students at Fordham University; and two migration and mental health scholars working to improve access to and utilization of health and mental health care for women asylum seekers in New York City. HMH partners with several grassroots organizations providing services and advocating for the rights of asylum seekers.

**Los Guedeses** will be making music at World Refugee Day 2023! We welcome band members **Ramon Fortunato, Reynaldo Arias, Gerald Lopez** and **Candelario Beltrez**. The set will feature Afro-Caribbean music performed on drums, guira and saxophone.
Performer Bios

Megumi Saruhashi is a violinist and composer, who grew up around rice paddy fields, Chiba Prefecture, Japan. Having performed around the globe from Carnegie Hall to refugee camps in Lebanon and Palestine, Megumi knows no boundary when it comes to performing music. Megumi has embraced her credo “The earth is my home, the sky is my blanket. Wherever I go, I am home”, with three bases she calls home, namely, Japan, New York and Egypt. Megumi has also been active as a soloist with ensembles and orchestras in Cairo, especially with El Manara ensemble. She has frequently appeared at the Cairo Opera House as a guest soloist. One of her compositions "Refugees" was composed for Syrian refugees in Aramoun, and palestinain refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon where she partnered with an NGO, URDA, and held a singing workshop called " Song without words." Megumi continually crosses borders -- literally and musically -- in her dedication to finding a unifying healing force through embracing diversity.

Megumi will be performing alongside Brian Prunka (oud) Kuba Cichocki (piano), Moto Fukushima (bass), & Keita Ogawa (percussion)

Nikkiesha Nicole McLeod is a queer, non-binary Trinidadian singer-songwriter, percussionist and writer. They began playing the steel pan at the age of twelve when they convinced their parents to let them join the neighborhood steel-band orchestra, Panasonic Connection. Their debut EP, Quarrel, was released in 2018. They’ve played the drum kit for many bands in New York City, the most notable are Telenovela Star and Kenyon Phillips & The Ladies In Waiting. Nikkiesha’s work has appeared in the literary journal [sic], and on the online literary and artistic expression of queer and trans* people of color forum Black Girl Dangerous, and the LGBTQ mental health anthology Headcase published by Oxford University Press. Nikkiesha blogs at https://nikkieshamcleod.com.

People's Theatre Project - Rooted in Washington Heights and Inwood, People's Theatre Project (PTP) makes theatre with and for immigrant communities to build a more just and equitable world. Now in its 14th anniversary season, PTP is Manhattan’s largest performing arts organization north of Harlem. Through ensemble-based, multilingual, and multigenerational programming, PTP’s unique brand of theatre is a powerful artistic platform for immigrants and members of the Latine, Black, and Queer communities.
Performer Bios

**Nataly Aukar** is a Lebanese-born and raised stand-up comic based in New York City. After working as a writer at a production house in Lebanon throughout college, Nataly graduated from the American University of Beirut and immediately moved to NY to pursue stand-up comedy. She’s a regular at New York Comedy Club, was featured on TimeOutNY, and has opened for Gad El-Maleh, Laurie Kilmartin, Hasan Minhaj, Mo Amer, and Ramy Youssef. Nataly also starred in Sofa So Good, a comedy short film by Noa Osheroff, featured on the New Yorker and selected at the Lower East Side Film Festival 2020, Aspen Shorts Fest 2020, and the Woodstock Film Festival 2020 amongst others. Nataly was featured in the first season of Pause with Sam Jay on HBO and was recently part of Netflix’s “Introducing…” showcase at the Netflix is a Joke Fest in 2022.

**RUSA LGBTQ+** is a network for Russian-speaking LGBTQ+ individuals, their friends, supporters and loved ones. RUSA LGBTQ+ has welcomed many LGBTQ+ asylum seekers from Kazakhstan, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and other countries of the former Soviet Union. At today’s festival, RUSA LGBTQ+ will present two performances. First, the singer and drag performance duo **Eduard Sidorov** and **Mercury** will perform; then, we will hear from saxophonist **Maksim Mitrofanov**.

**The Square Theatre** is an artist collective co-founded by immigrant artists **Jing Dong** and **Jiawen Hu**. They use research-based and socially-engaged performance to create public space for connection and conversation. Through a devising process that invites community participation, they create interdisciplinary performances telling real people’s real stories. Their recent projects include A Sample of Immigrant Life, Travel As, Tape Art Workshop, and Slow Dance. They were Artist-in-Residence at The Performance Project 2019-2020 and grantee of LMCC’s Creative Engagement in 2020 and 2021. Their projects were invited to the ROAR Festival in 2022.
Performer Bios

**Viktoriia Viennikova** is an Honored Artist of Ukraine. She fled the war with her minor daughter. Despite many challenges in her own life, she dedicates her performances to Ukrainians and donates to help others in Ukraine. Her bright and charismatic style makes each of her performances memorable!

**Xavier Mujica** is a musician that will be performing for World Refugee Day through our partnership with the Queer Detainee Empowerment Project (QDEP).
Vendors

EDITH ESCAMILLA
Edith Escamilla will be selling crochet works.

EMMA’S TORCH
Emma’s Torch will be selling baked goods. Emma’s Torch is a non-profit social enterprise. They provide refugees with in-depth culinary training as well as employability, equity, and empowerment training.

EUFEMIA NERI
Eufemia Neri will be selling hand-sewn items.

HANNA ABRAMIUK
Hannah Abramiuk will be selling jewelry from Vaba Handmade Necklace.

MARY JOSE PRUDENTE
Mary Jose Prudente will be selling jewelry and clothing.

NAITOU SOW
Naitou is an asylee from Guinea and has had her home-based business for over 10 years. These fabrics are sewn and crafted in Ivory Coast and then shipped to Naitou in NYC.

NASTASIA SHYGAIEVA
Nastasia will be selling works of visual art, motanka dolls, jewelry, and trays.

THE ART OF A WARRIOR
Osmar Guerrero will be selling his handmade paintings.

IBETH CORREA
Ibeth will be selling handmade paintings and works of art made with origami. Having fled Venezuela in 2018 with her husband, Ibeth shared that she "represents the migrants of the world who seek to reinvent themselves."
Join us at future BKCM events!

The Brooklyn Conservatory of Music hosts more than 200 events each year, from intimate concerts to lively dance parties. Our events are designed to inspire, entertain, connect and broaden our community. Music is a natural way to build community by enabling New York City residents to connect with our organization, and with each other.

**Juneteenth**
Monday, June 19, 2023 | 11 am | Brower Park | Free

**Community Music School Open House**
Sunday, June 25, 2023 | 2–5pm | Free

[Click here to learn more!](#)

---

**It's New York Music Month!**

Musicians rehearse for free in June as part of NY Music Month, an initiative of the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME). Thanks to support from MOME, musicians have access to free studio time (up to 10 hours per artist) from June 1–30, 2023.

[Click here to learn more!](#)