

# Festival to celebrate African culture

By Nancy Watson  
Sentinel-Voice

The richness, beauty and diversity of African culture will be celebrated this weekend at the second annual Black Heritage Festival with food, crafts, art, music and dancing.

The festival begins at noon Saturday at the Sammy Davis Jr. Festival Plaza at Lorenzi Park with a Black Heritage marketplace and art exhibit and at noon Sunday under the Fremont Street Experience.

The event's producer, Diana Aird has planned a cultural journey through the black diaspora with hours of continual music, poetry, performers, and story tellers.

"It will be a big party, a chance to get people together, get them loose and show them something," Aird said this week.

The intent of the festival is to showcase Afrocentric culture which is not only

African, but the culture as it has evolved under European influence in the United States.

Audiences will see, feel and taste the African influence in music, art, dance, food, and clothes.

Vendors will sell an array of Creole, soul, Caribbean and Cuban food and the music will span the ages from the drums of Africa to reggae and even the more contemporary sounds.

Dennis Walston, the King of Limbo, Rama the fire eater and eight Caribbean dancers will perform both days.

Walston, known as the King Cobra who has perfected his dance so well that he is recognized in the Guinness Book of Records, will dance under a flaming limbo stick only 6 inches from the floor.

The festival will blossom on Sunday into a full-blown extravaganza of visual and audio delight as the performers entertain from four stages.



The Fruit's cultural journey will include several ethnic costumes, dancers and food.

Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

A five-segment production, will begin at noon on the main stage, near the Golden Nugget Hotel, beginning with:

- "Roots: A Tribute of Mother Africa," a celebration of the great kings and queens of Africa.

Roots will include five drummers, four African dance troupes, six belly dancers, as well as the 26 kings and queens of Africa.

- "Hot Buttered Soul: The African Influence in America" will excite the audience with a review of the black experience in America and African-Americans' contributions to music, dance and theatre.

Performers for Hot Buttered Soul include a four-piece band, the Boogie Woogie Kids, the Austin Dancers and a featured vocalist.

- "Conga: The African Influence in Latin America," The pulsating rhythms and dances of Latin American will feature Latin Breeze, Paragon Latin Dance Troupe and Island Fantasy Dance Troupe.

- "Caribbean Delights: A Taste of Rhythm and Spice of

the Islands," will feature King Cobra, Rama the fire eater, 12 Caribbean dancers and vocalists Bonny B and Asabi.

- "Carnival Bacchanal: A Celebration of Life Harmony and Universality," will be the festival's grand finale and will present 30 carnival-costumed dancers, some with 12-foot costumes and a nine piece band as well as the entire cast of the previous four segments.

At the same time, on stage two, near Fitzgerald's Hotel, a reggae jam will take place with Stan Rankin T and the Meschak Band providing the music for the Reggae Dance Hall Dancers.

The festival has been made possible by the efforts of the city of Las Vegas Parks and Recreation Division, the Fremont Experience and a very dedicated cast and crew, Aird

said.

She hopes local African-Americans will support the festival by attending and enjoying themselves.

"More than anyone they should come to this party," she added. "This is our black community extending a friendly handshake to others within the community of Las Vegas as well as those from outside the area."



DIANA AIRD

## Review

(Continued from Page 8) couldn't really put my finger on what it was. I'm not gonna front, you know, I think boys are cute and all, but I wouldn't want to talk to them or have a relationship with them." — Alaza, 17-years-old, from Portland, OR.

All 14 young women very candidly lay bear their vision of their world. While their stories remind us that much in our society has not changed, their firm grasp of the issues provides optimism about our future possibilities. It affirms that being young, black and female can be synonymous with pride, independence of thought and self-reliance.

As acclaimed writer Ntozake Shange writes in the foreword, "A grown black woman, I, Ntozake, want to make witness of the backbone, clarity and fragile, agile spirits these young girls and women have chosen to share with the world. Yes, they no longer

obsess about shining floors, or where to sit on the bus, or why a poll tax test was failed again. Their energies are world-class, their focus global, their selves glistening in a beauty usually only mothers notice.

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**Las Vegas' 2nd Annual BLACK HERITAGE WEEKEND FESTIVAL**

**FREE TO THE PUBLIC !!**

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**SATURDAY, MARCH 29**  
Noon to 9 p.m.

Sammy Davis Jr. Festival Plaza & throughout Lorenzi Park at Twin Lakes Dr. & W. Washington

Hwy. 95 West to Rancho Drive exit, head north to Washington Avenue, turn left (west) - travel 1 block.

**"Black Heritage Market Place & Art Exhibit"**

Vibrant, enlightening presentations in celebration of Black culture featuring the Afro-centric arts, crafts, fashions and products of over 50 local artists and artisans. Poets, storytellers and interesting workshops. Delicious authentic ethnic foods will be available.

**"Entertainment Showcase & Fashion Show"**

Continuous entertainment throughout the complex featuring local and regional talent (professionals and future stars).

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**EASTER SUNDAY**  
**MARCH 30**  
Noon to 10 p.m.  
Downtown

**FREMONT STREET EXPERIENCE LAS VEGAS**

**"An Entertainment Extravaganza"**

Continuous Star Performances Under The Lights! More than 200 performers will entertain along 5 blocks on Fremont Street from Main Street to Las Vegas Blvd. — showcasing Las Vegas' best and brightest Afro-centric dancers, singers, choirs, musicians, bands, variety & specialty acts . . . and much

**3 p.m. — Easter Egg Hunt**

**Noon to 4 p.m. —** Choirs, poets, storytellers, fashion & hair designs, art & craftwork exhibits.

**5 p.m. to 10 p.m. —** On-going Stage Show, Reggae Dance Hall & Street Performers (culminating in a Mardi Gras-style

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An Aird & Associates • Caribbean Delights Production

Sponsored in part by: The City of Las Vegas' Parks & Leisure Activities Division, The Fremont Street Experience and the Volunteers of the Cross-Cultural Alliance.

**Event Hotline: (702) 225-2000 or Call (702) 454-1212 for more details.**