

**News Release**  
**Public Information**  
**Department**

April 2003

**May Music in the Galleries Features Haitian Drum, Dance, and Song Virtuoso Bonga Sunday, May 18, at 3 p.m.**

The Brooklyn Museum of Art's popular *Music in the Galleries* program celebrates Haitian Flag Day by presenting Gaston Jean-Baptiste, better-known as **Bonga**, master of the Haitian drum, on **Sunday, May 18, at 3 p.m.** The performance is free with Museum admission.

Bonga opened the New York premiere of the Rolling Stones "Voodoo Lounge" tour and he is prominently featured on recordings by Wyclef Jean and Salif Keita. He has appeared at music venues around the world, performs regularly with Grace Jones, and is a featured performer with Urban Tap ensemble.

Bonga is a spirited virtuoso who has been performing and studying traditional Haitian drum, dance, and song since the age of seven. He began playing drums in his family peristil (vodun temple) in Haiti's La Plaine region. Bonga will be accompanied on drum by his son Tiga, who also excels on didgeridoo.

A ceremonial drummer with a vast repertoire of pan-African rhythms, Bonga was at the core of Haiti's popular mizik rasin movement. With traditional rhythms and progressive instrumentation, Bonga has created a dynamic version of vodun jazz.

He has used his depth and experience in traditional music to establish himself as a sought-after percussionist by professionals of all musical genres. A performer, studio musician, accompanist, vodun priest, and educator, Bonga works extensively on stage, in recording sessions and educational workshops using organic instruments such as bamboo, tcha-tcha, and ogan. He is one of the few expert craftsmen outside of Haiti who continues to build drums using centuries-old techniques.

## **Music**

page 2

He has been in the forefront of rasin music since its outset in the late 1970s, recording and performing with such groups as Boukman Eksperyans, Foula, and Boukan Guinen. Since then mizik rasin, has attracted a world following and Bonga has continued to play solo and in ensemble.

### **Media Contacts:**

Sally Williams, Public Information Officer: (718) 501-6330

James Gordon, Media Relations Manager: (718) 501-6334

Adam Husted, Public Information Coordinator: (718) 501-6331

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **Admission:**

Contribution \$6; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$3. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extention 234.

#### **Museum Hours:**

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

#### **Directions:**

**Subway:** Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. **Bus:** B71, B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.