



Apollo hosts Kwanzaa celebration

Forces of Nature headlines performances

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There was no better way to celebrate Kwanzaa than to see a performance by Forces of Nature at the world famous Apollo Theater on Dec. 6.

Imhotep Gary Bryd, radio personality on WBAI, WLIB and WBLS, hosted the Kwanzaa Celebration.

With the pouring of water, Nana Camille Yarborough conducted the libation that pays homage to our ancestors, as the audience named a lot of famous people who had paved the way. She concluded the libation by having the audience say, "Love our people more than we love our individual selves."

About 20 years ago, Abdel R. Salaam started Regeneration Night. Since to regenerate is to restore, it is appropriate to have as a part of the celebration the Restoration Dance Theatre Junior Company to perform "Afro House," an energetic African dance piece combined with club movements.

In honor of Mr. Salaam's mother who works in the healthcare industry, a solo dancer performed a piece called "ER." One dancer, one table and the kind of movements that were done in the piece should have had a disclaimer, "Professional Dancer. Do not try this at home." The movements depicted in the dance described many different medical conditions from giving birth to having a heart attack. The soloist even showed doing a breast examination. It wasn't provocative just obvious.

Songhai Djeli and Flute Visions performed musical libation to honor the ancestors. This Kwanzaa is based on harvest. We stand on the shoulders of the first builders and what we accomplish here, we are supposed to accomplish. Their next piece was music from Charlie Parker Suite. Songhai Djeli and Flute Visions is about consciousness in their music.

Fred Goode, who provides medicine to low-income HIV patients and Dr. Icilma Fergus, chief director of cardiology at Harlem Hospital, received a special African mask for their achievement in the African-American community.

Before the second act, there was a Building Block ceremony. Each of four children said what their career is going to be and a mentor for each gave them a principle to guide them along their journey.

After seeing Forces of Nature's other piece "Smooove", the audience couldn't help being laid back. David Pleasant had to get the people up. He gave body sounds and rhythms from the Gullah people. He taught the audience the different vibration of sounds through call and response.

Forces of Nature ended the evening with a piece called "Cult of the Wolves." Cult is not a bad word; it's just short for culture. The dancers demonstrated the culture of the wolves. In the dance, the "apprentice" prepared the wolves and a "doctor" released a spell and executed the ritual. All rituals are not necessarily evil and as a matter of fact, the only person who can cast a spell on a person is that person.

Each individual is their own master and apprentice, to cast the spell and execute the plan. Imhotep Gary Bryd was right when he said that Forces of Nature carries messages in everything they do.