



## Office of General Services

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### **JODY WATLEY & SHALAMAR RELOADED TO HEADLINE THE BLACK ARTS AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL PRESENTED BY MCDONALD'S**

New York State Office of General Services Commissioner RoAnn M. Destito today announced the lineup for New York State's 2017 Black Arts and Cultural Festival presented by McDonald's which will be held from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, August 5 at the Empire State Plaza in Albany. This year's festival will feature performances by Grammy-winning artist Jody Watley and one of Jay-Z's newest protégés, Young Paris.

"The Black Arts and Cultural Festival is our annual celebration of the history, art, culture, and entertainment of the people of the African Diaspora that features a variety of attractions that everyone can enjoy," Commissioner Destito said. "We're very excited to have Jody Watley performing at this year's festival, and I want to thank McDonald's and all our generous sponsors for helping us to bring an exciting lineup of music, art, dance, and activities to the Empire State Plaza for this cultural event."

"McDonald's is proud to continue to sponsor the Black Arts & Cultural Festival," said Renee Reardon, local McDonald's owner/operator and president of the McDonald's Operators of the Capital District. "The event provides outstanding entertainment and educational opportunities for people in the greater Albany area, and sponsoring such a wonderful event helps to continue the commitment McDonald's has made to give back to the communities where we do business. We are honored to support the Black Arts & Cultural Festival each year."

The festival will feature a special performance by Jody Watley. With her multi-platinum selling genre bending catalog that spans decades into the now over 10 albums: disco, soul, funk, pop, contemporary R&B, hip/hop, jazz, adult contemporary and electronica; the Jody Watley concert experience is vast, rich and always a soulful party. Since her days as the original female lead vocalist of the R&B trio Shalamar, Watley emerged as always ahead of the pop culture curve and has been at the forefront of some of the most groundbreaking trends and movements in modern pop culture, serving as the style template for today's women in contemporary music.

Hailing from the city of Hudson, Young Paris will also be a featured performer at this year's festival. Young Paris recently dropped his critically acclaimed EP titled "Afrobeats," which includes a remix of "Best of Me," featuring Nigerian superstar Tiwa Savage, and "One Time,"

featuring Reekado Banks. Young Paris' latest accomplishment finds him as a signee to Jay-Z's entertainment brand, Roc Nation, which has grounded his mission to bring a new wave of Afrobeats and international vibes to the mainstream music scene, tying in his roots with the times.

The festival will kick off at 2 p.m. with an opening parade on the Plaza that will feature the sounds of Brooklyn United Marching Band, the Wassa Pan Afrika Dance Ensemble, the Mini Tone Steppers, and other local community groups. The parade will showcase the partnership of history and culture that is the core of the community.

The day's lineup will also include performances by local rap artist Kay Hollywood, The Jazzmanian Devils, a jazz band comprised of Albany High School students and recent alumni, gospel with Dr. Rhonda Ferguson and the Capital District Youth Mass Choir, local community choirs, and DJ Brian B.

In addition to an exciting lineup of talent on the main stage, the festival will feature two destination areas:

- **Destination Heritage**, featuring a replica of the Emancipation Proclamation and African dance and drumming with Wassa Pan Afrika
- **Destination Arts and Ideas**, with hands-on activities to expand participants' horizons in painting, music, film, tap, and theater, featuring Scratch Academy and Albany Center Galleries.

### **New For This Year's Festival**

In addition to bringing back some of the most popular activities from recent Black Arts and Cultural Festivals, New York State and McDonald's strive each year to keep this annual event fresh and exciting. New to this year's festival will be:

- Sounds and Styles, featuring the NYS Barber Expo "King of the Capitol" Barber Battle, fashion by ANX Clothing, and Curvention plus-sized models.
- Clinique makeup techniques.
- Albany Boys and Girls Club's can jam, ladder ball, basketball drills, and more.
- Mister Goodstuff's Soul Dance Party.

Activities throughout the day will also include a children's area with pony rides, face painting, arts and crafts, and bounce rides; a visit from Ronald McDonald; dancing with Her Temple Monologues, 518.BK, and the Frank Chapman Memorial Institute; Her Temple Scratch Academy, where kids can make spin art; Triple Threat All-Stars Cheerleading and Dance; and an Albany Center Gallery satellite exhibit with artists showcasing their work on black arts and culture, including an artist who will create a work of art that day specific to the festival theme.

One the biggest draws of the festival is the amazing food our vendors will be serving, including Jamaican and other Caribbean cuisine, chicken, fish, and ribs prepared by local churches, and desserts to satisfy everyone's sweet tooth.

### **Performance Schedule**

#### Main Stage

- 2:00 Festival Welcome and Parade Celebration
- 2:15 Brooklyn United Marching band
- 2:45 McDonald's Moment
- 2:50 Dr. Ferguson and the Capital District Youth Mass Choir
- 3:30 Vocalist Kay Hollywood
- 3:45 Young Paris
- 4:45 Wassan Pan Afrika – African dance and drums
- 5:30 Jody Watley and Shalamar Reloaded

Free parking will be available in the East Garage off Madison Avenue. Paid parking is also available at the visitor or V lot underneath the plaza.

For event updates and additional information on opening acts, people can follow @plazaevents on Twitter, visit Empire State Plaza on facebook, or call (518) 474-4759. For additional information, including ground rules, visit our website at [www.empirestateplaza.org](http://www.empirestateplaza.org).

No alcoholic beverages, coolers (defined as rigid insulated containers), or glass containers of any kind; no animals or pets (excludes ADA-defined service animals) will be allowed. Alcohol will be served by vendors to adults with proper identification.

Sponsors include McDonald's, MVP Health Care, New York State of Health, New York's 529 College Savings Program, Renaissance Albany Hotel, Mildred Elley, NYS Homes and Community Renewal, Hot 99.1, CDTA, and Albany.com.

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