

# ***Afro-Latin Musical Theater in the Americas and Its African Origins***

**Spring 2016**

“AFRO-LATIN MUSICAL THEATER IN THE AMERICAS AND ITS AFRICAN ORIGINS” is a Yip Harburg Foundation music-theater workshop directed towards weekly hands-on explorations of the intersections of theater, music, and dance in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly manifestations that have evolved out of the improvised theater, drumming, dance, and song of African ritual. Specifically, the focus is on the areas that encompass present-day Nigeria and Congo in Western and Central Africa, and Brazil and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic) in Latin America.

**New York City, a historic *ajiaco* (spicy stew) of immigrant peoples and cultures, lays at our feet rich opportunities for practical intercultural exchange with some of the world's leading proponents of African and Latin-American performance. Student participants will have weekly performance workshops in music-theater, dance, and drumming with performance professionals who have roots in the African and Latin-American countries of our focus. Thus, we trace relationships between Africa and the Americas from prehistoric times to the present.**



*Cuban students drumming and performing a competitive dance with origins in Central Africa, rumba columbia, in a celebration of the Cuban National Day of Education. Photo: Elizabeth Ruf-Maldonado.*

*The workshop will be led by Elizabeth Ruf-Maldonado, Ph.D., who wrote her dissertation at Columbia University on performances of African heritage in the theater of contemporary Cuba, a country she has been visiting since 1991 and where she lived for an extended period of time. She is a theater director, writer, actor, and dancer, and is versed in the music and songs of many world cultures and traditions. She has nearly three decades of experience teaching adult education classes in immigrant communities around the country and is a full time member of the faculty at Boricua College in New York City.*

**In addition to students focusing on musical theater studies, this workshop might interest students whose focus is:**

- Anthropology and music
- Latin-American music, dance and theater
- The African roots of American musical theater

**There can be up to 10 students in the class which will meet Tuesdays 6pm to 8pm / Location TBA.**

***Students should contact their mentors a.s.a.p.  
This workshop can be taken for ESC credit.***