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**FRANKLIN PARK COALITION ANNOUNCES
2010 ELMA LEWIS PLAYHOUSE IN THE PARK
FREE SUMMER PERFORMING ARTS SERIES
Tuesdays, July 13 – August 17, 2010**

(BOSTON) The Franklin Park Coalition (FPC) partners with the National Center of Afro-American Artists (NCAAA) and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department's ParkARTS Program to present a free performing arts series named for the founder and director of the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts. Lewis, a beloved Boston icon, established Playhouse in the Park in 1966, and presented artists like Duke Ellington, Olatunji, Odetta, Billy Taylor, and the Boston Ballet. In its original inception, it ran through 1978.

Five years ago, the FPC, NCAAA, and ParkARTS began their effort to re-establish Playhouse in the Park as an exciting multicultural summer performance venue. This year, they present 11 Tuesday shows. The 11 a.m. morning shows run about one hour, and are geared toward children, families and summer camps. Evening shows, hosted by Naheem, run from 6 to 8:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted. These FREE, outdoor performances take place at Valley Gates, next to The Playstead, the big field in Franklin Park between White Stadium and the rear entrance of the Zoo, not far from where the original Playhouse stood. Performances take place weather permitting. For more information, call (617) 442-4141 or visit www.franklinparkcoalition.org.

July 13, 11 a.m. – **Stephen O'Neal and IntaAfrika, plus Marcus Santos and Batukaxe**

IntaAfrika, features Stephen O'Neal who has been part of the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts' annual performance of Langston Hughes' "Black Nativity" since the beginning in 1970. O'Neal and drummer Salim Abdul-Rahman were students of the world renowned M. Babatunde Olatunji. O'Neal is the co-founder of IntaAfrika which has a 15 year history in the community. Joined by his teenage son, Stephen Korliss, the group has traveled extensively, with stops in Senegal and Gambia.

Afro-Brazilian ensemble Batukaxé presents a modern style of the authentic tradition of Blocos Afro and Axe music. Marcus Santos and Sandro Scoccia created Batukaxé as part of AfroBrazil.org, an organization whose goal is to preserve, promote, and strengthen the Afro- Brazilian culture in the U.S. Developed in the state of Bahia, this music is rooted in the tradition of the Carnival Blocos Afro, groups of vocalists and percussionists performing Brazilian rhythms based on African roots.

July 13, 6 p.m. – **Elan Trotman**

One of the most exciting up-and-comers among his generation of saxophonists, Elan Trotman explores contemporary jazz in his own way. Inspired by Arturo Tappin, Grover Washington Jr., and Kirk Whalum, Elan's music is never predictable. Born and raised in Barbados, Elan remembers hearing calypsos, reggae and local music in his early days. He started learning piano when he was seven, taking up the saxophone five years later. When Elan was in high school, saxophonist Arturo Tappin became his mentor. Elan was also inspired by Grover Washington Jr., and the contemporary musicians who came down for the

Barbados Jazz Festival, along with his own roots in gospel and Caribbean music. In 1997, Elan was awarded a full scholarship to Berklee by the Barbados government, earning a Bachelor's degree in Music Education. In addition to recording and performing, he is a teacher in the Boston Public Schools.

July 20, 11 a.m. - **Stajez Dance Company**

Stajez has been teaching dance to children in the Boston area for over 15 years. This Randolph-based company's performance team has a huge repertoire that includes Modern, Tap, Afro-Caribbean, Jazz, Hip-Hop, Liturgical dance and more. All members of the company, who come from Dorchester, Roxbury, Hyde Park and other communities, are honor roll students and dynamic performers who have performed all across the country.

July 20, 6 p.m. – **Mango Blue**

Mango Blue blends an exciting mixture of styles to create a refreshing new sound in Afro-Latin and World music, through songs of celebration and social conscience. Led by Ecuadorian composer, bassist and singer Alex Alvear, this invigorating hybrid playfully integrates a wide array of influences from Rhythm & Blues, Jazz and Funk to Caribbean Roots, with a strong rhythmic foundation that draws from diverse Afro-Latin musical traditions.

July 27, 11 a.m. - **OrigiNation**

The dancers of OrigiNation are dedicated to promoting the importance of self-respect, health, nutrition, education and self-esteem, while emphasizing the impact that African influences have had on dance. Under the direction of choreographer Shaumba Yandje Dibinga, they specialize in hip-hop, jazz, tap, step and Caribbean dance.

July 27, 6 p.m. – **Boston Soul Revue**

This local favorite plays time classic dance hits of the 60's and 70's. Selections include songs by Otis Redding, The Temptations, Sam & Dave, Aretha, Wilson Pickett, Marvin Gaye, James Brown, Al Green, Etta James, Harold Melvin and The Bluenotes, Commodores, Stevie Wonder, Donna Summer, the O'Jays, and all the great disco and funky dance music.

August 3, 11 a.m. - **Estrellas Tropicales**

Cheer the baton twirling as this amazing troop from Jamaica Plain dances in honor of their Caribbean countries.

August 3, 6 p.m.- **Zili Misik**

Zili Misik creates music that bridges cultures, generations, and continents. With captivating sounds that evoke the African continent, Zili retraces routes of forced exile and cultural resistance through rhythm and song. Powerful Haitian, Brazilian, and West African rhythms infuse Zili's original and traditional folk songs. Reconnecting Haitian mizik rasin, jazz, roots reggae, samba, Cuban son, and neo-soul, Zili honors its influences while creating a sound that is uniquely its own. Zili's songs are sensual, political, self-reflective, and positive, with lyrics that glide seamlessly from English to Creole to Portuguese to Spanish.

August 10, 11 a.m. – **Ballet Rox**

This multi-racial youth-based professional ballet company, led by Tony Williams, a former principal dancer with the Boston Ballet and a former member of the Joffrey Ballet is best known for its beloved annual production of *Urban Nutcracker*.

August 10, 6 p.m. – **Kendrick Oliver and the New Life Jazz Orchestra**

Enjoy the gospel jazz of Boston-based Kendrick Oliver and his New Life Jazz Orchestra. Think of Sister Rosetta Tharpe singing with The Count Basie Band and you begin to get an idea of Oliver's vision. "We took old spirituals like "Wade in the Water" and "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho," he says. "We would put a Basie twinge on it. We are constantly working on it in rehearsal, learning how to interpret Basie's music and adding it to the New Life spirit."

August 17, Dusk – Mayor Menino's Movie Night

Bring the whole family to see a family-friendly movie in the park. Title to be announced in the coming weeks.

Said Walter Little, of the Franklin Park Coalition Board of Directors, colleague and supporter of the late Elma Lewis, "Miss Lewis was a visionary leader who sought to inspire and train young people. The Playhouse gave students from the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts both a stage for public performance as well as exposure to professional musicians and entertainers. She sought to instill in young people of color the highest aspirations for success. The Playhouse revival this summer features young performers, offers shows targeting youth audiences, and as always, builds community around Franklin Park."

The Elma Lewis Playhouse in the Park is produced by First Night Boston, in cooperation with the City of Boston, Mayor Thomas M. Menino; the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Antonia Pollak, Commissioner; ParkARTS and the National Center for Afro-American Artists, with support from an anonymous foundation, Target, and many local Franklin Park supporters. Boston Parks and Recreation Department's ParkARTS Program, of which this is a part, is sponsored by Bank of America

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High resolution photos available on request.