



307 Seventh Avenue #1904 New York, NY 10001 Tel.212.206.6674 Fax.212.255.8467 www.creativetime.org

Press contact: Sarah Bacon
212-206-6674 x 205
sarahb@creativetime.org

New York Artists Make Sonic Portraits of Home in *Local Frequencies*
Creative Time Presents New Songs by Toshi Reagon, Everton Sylvester, and Gabri Christa

March 18, 2003: Creative Time proudly introduces *Local Frequencies*, a multi-faceted CD project produced by music veteran **Danny Kapilian** that draws inspiration from three New York City communities and their residents. Extending Creative Time's legacy of commissioning artists to respond to their environment and introducing New Yorkers to innovative artistic practice, **Toshi Reagon, Everton Sylvester,** and **Gabri Christa** were commissioned to compose new works about Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, and the North Shore of Staten Island, where they respectively reside. *Local Frequencies* blends three artists' perspectives of home and community, revealing to its listeners the many unique interpretations and experiences of New York City.



The sounds of the City shape much of our quotidian experience in the public realm—on the street, in the subway, in line, and at the cashier—constituting live, daily soundtracks for each of our lives. As such, *Local Frequencies* started with the artists, accompanied by producer Danny Kapilian, collecting sounds from their respective communities that signify home like chats with neighbors on the street, radio in nearby restaurants and bodegas, local sermons, and their own new music, songs, and poetry. The recordings were then edited by the artists, Kapilian, and Sound Designer and Mixer Rich Tozzoli into three unique 15-minute compositions. The three compositions were compiled onto a CD for *Local Frequencies* and narrated by Rita Houston of radio station WFUV. To reach the broadest possible audience, Creative Time will distribute *Local Frequencies* in a variety of formats. CDs will be available to residents and visitors in the artists' neighborhoods at a variety of sites including hair salons, bookstores, film screenings, and takeout food restaurants. For those living elsewhere in the five boroughs **the CD will be broadcast to greater New York by WFUV (90.7) on May 2 and May 7, 2003.** Lastly, several live performances with the artists will take place throughout the spring of 2003.



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Each composition bears the artist's stylistic signature. For example, singer-songwriter **Toshi Reagon's** piece is intimate and direct, "I picked 3 streets, one for each song...and went out with a mic and camera crew to film interviews with folks. I wouldn't let the crew get too close because I thought people would perform, and I wanted to catch them in their element." In her three songs, "Nostrand Avenue," "Rogers Avenue," and "Lincoln Place" she intersperses voices of people from the streets with her own rich and velvety voice layered several times over, resulting in rhythmic, tonal, and rolling ballads.

Poet, **Everton Sylvester** uses spoken word in "A Bed-Stuy Story." With his band **Brooklyn Funk Essentials**, Sylvester contrasts roosters in Jamaica with sirens in Bed-Stuy, while likening the sense of community in both. "Before Bed-Stuy," he says, "I lived in Astoria, Queens, as well as Carnarsie, Park Slope, and Flatbush, Brooklyn—homes where I never felt a sense of neighborhoodness. Now, often my doorbell rings at 11:59 a.m. and it's Omar, Tamika, David, or Deborah reminding me to move my car, and we beat a parking ticket together. [This has] helped me, an immigrant from Jamaica, to feel at home in New York City."

A dancer, choreographer, and teacher, **Gabri Christa's** soundscape, "Talking to Talk" is a choreographed collage of recordings of her high school students, taken from both in and outside school. Framed with music by **Vernon Reid**, the hundreds of edited phrases, words, and noises tell their own story. Christa explains, "In this piece I aimed to reflect the bits and pieces of these teens' lives, and the way I perceive and receive them. In this culture we talk at teens and don't listen enough. My piece reflects how much these young people have to say and the incessant adult voices surrounding them."

Employing their music, voices, and poetry, the artists in *Local Frequencies* reveal the daily rhythms and patterns of their own homes and explore how art can both help us understand and be an expression of community. The *Local Frequencies* website will have more information on the artists and their process', CD distribution, and associated events. Please visit www.creativetime.org.

Creative Time would like to thank our partner WFUV, www.wfuv.org.

The Artists

Toshi Reagon is a singer-songwriter, producer, and full-time musician. She currently tours both as a solo artist and with her band Big Lovely. Reagon's albums include her 1994 self-released debut, *The Rejected Stone*; Smithsonian Folkways *Kindness*, 1997; *The Righteous Ones*, 1999, and *Toshi*, 2002. In 2003 and 2004 Toshi will celebrate the 30th anniversary of Sweet Honey in the Rock, the group founded by her mother, Bernice Johnson Reagon.

Everton Sylvester teaches at the City University of New York. He is the lead poet with bands Brooklyn Funk Essentials and Searching for Banjo. He has recorded on RCA, Dorado, Shanachie,



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Double Moon, and Unitone World. Sylvester is a 1993 James Michener fellow as well as a 1997 and 1998 Sundance Screenwriters fellow. His poetry is featured in *Aloud – Voices from the Nuyorican Café*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Brooklyn Review*, *River Run*, *Mississippi Review*, and *Gathering of the Tribes*. Everton is featured in the PBS-syndicated series *United States of Poetry* and the movies *Slamming* and *Prince of Central Park*. His first book of poems, *Backyard In Bed-Stuy*, is a tribute to his neighbors and neighborhood.

Gabri Christa, a dancer and choreographer, was born and raised in Curaçao in the Dutch Caribbean, has lived in Cuba, the Netherlands, and Puerto Rico. A graduate of the School for New Dance Development, College for the Arts, Amsterdam, Gabri Christa also holds a MFA from the University of Washington. Christa was a founder of DanzAbierta and has performed with the Bill T. Jones Dance Company. Her choreography has been presented throughout Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States. She has taught dance and lectured across the country. Christa is a John Simon Guggenheim Fellow (1999) and currently teaches at Curtis High School on the North Shore of Staten Island.

Producer

Danny Kapilian is a New York-based music and live event producer and programmer. He has produced events for Carnegie Hall; the Symphony Center, Chicago; the Hollywood Bowl; the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) Opera House; the JVC Jazz Festival; Summer Stage, Central Park, New York; the Experience Music Project (EMP), Seattle, among many others. Kapilian has worked with hundreds of world-renowned performers.

Creative Time

Local Frequencies continues Creative Time's historic commitment to music and performing arts, and the exploration of sound's role in the public realm, most recently exemplified in *Sonic Garden* at the World Financial Center and Bill Fontana's *Falling Echoes* created for the 2002 *Consuming Places* exhibition. *Local Frequencies* also engages the artist and his/her community, a dynamic often explored by Creative Time, most recently in Chris Doyle's *Leap*. For the last 30 years, Creative Time has presented multidisciplinary public arts events and projects, surprising New Yorkers and visitors alike with fresh artistic content in unlikely urban locales. From Times Square, the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage, the skies over Manhattan, and the recent *Tribute in Light* (the temporary light memorial to 9.11.01) to storefronts, milk cartons, deli cups, and billboards, Creative Time supports artists in enlivening the New York cityscape. For more information please visit www.creativetime.org.

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Ongoing: Four *Video Portraits* by **Thomas Struth** air in *The 59th Minute: Video Art on the Times Square Astrovision* through May 18, 2003 in conjunction with The Metropolitan Museum of Art's mid-career retrospective, *Thomas Struth*. **Upcoming:** *What is What, April, 2003:* Creative Time will present three street performances by *Crutchmaster*, **Bill Shannon** and launch an expository website, www.whatiswhat.com featuring video footage of the performances and opportunities to learn more about the



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artist's practice. *Art on the Plaza, Spring/Summer 2003*: Creative Time presents the third installation in the long-term public sculpture series on the Plaza of The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park. Artist TBA.