

You are Invited to Attend

# Ologundê

Brazilian Folklore Dance Ensemble

and

# Willie Perdomo

Nuyorican Poet & Author

Friday, May 8, 2009  
MCC Theatre, Building 4  
7:30pm

Free and Open to the Public  
Parking in Lot F

Limited seating - tickets are required for admission.

Tickets are available through [monroecctickets.com](http://monroecctickets.com),  
the Brighton Campus Center Service Desk or the  
Damon City Campus Bookstore.

Special needs can be accommodated by calling  
the Brighton Campus Center at 292-2534  
at least two weeks prior to this event.

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Brazilian Folklore  
Dance Ensemble

# Ologundê



& Willie  
Perdomo  
Nuyorican Poet & Author

The Monroe Community College Dialogues on Diversity Series Presents

# Willie Perdomo & Ologundê



Willie Perdomo is a prize-winning Nuyorican poet and children's book author. He is the author of *Where a Nickel Costs a Dime*, *Postcards of El Barrio* and *Smoking Lovely*, which received a PEN American Center Beyond Margins Award. His children's book, *Visiting Langston*, received the Coretta Scott King Honors. Perdomo was also the recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts Poetry Fellowship in 2001, and a Fiction Fellowship in 2006. He is a Pushcart Prize nominee, and recently was a Woolrich Fellow in Creative Writing at Columbia University. He is co-founder/publisher of Cypher Books and teaches in New York City.

Mr. Perdomo was a member of the 1991 Nuyorican Poetry Slam team and has performed his poetry on PBS' *The United States of Poetry* and HBO's *Def Poetry*. He first read poetry aloud on a microphone for the Nuyorican Poets' Cafe at age twenty-two. Despite being featured on many documentaries about poetry in performance, Willie Perdomo considers the performance to be secondary to the writing and rejects the "performance poet" label. He does, however, feel that powerful oral delivery of his poems can bring his words to more people.

Willie Perdomo grew up in predominantly Spanish East Harlem, New York. His father emigrated from Puerto Rico in his early twenties. Perdomo's dark skin led to many assumptions that Perdomo is African-American, despite his purely Puerto Rican heritage. He attended public schools until sixth grade, when he won a scholarship to Friends Seminary, a private Quaker school in lower Manhattan. This proved to be a shocking shift for inner-city Perdomo, unaccustomed to Quaker ways and suddenly surrounded by white prep-school boys. He got into a few fights there before he met a friendly school receptionist named Ed who told him, "You need to reroute this energy you have." Soon after hearing this advice, teenage Willie heard Ed read some of his poetry. He was inspired and began writing poems to submit to Ed for criticism. Ed became Perdomo's mentor, helping to craft his voice and style. By his senior year he was published in the New York Public Library publication *New Youth Connections*. After graduating from Friends Seminary, he moved to nearby Ithaca College and studied a variety of subjects. He currently lives in New York City and is working on his next project, *Emergency Money*.



The group's director, Dendê, is a former member of the famed Timbalada band and has been performing professionally since the age of 14. He toured throughout Brazil, Europe and Asia, and has appeared on various television shows. As a member of Timbalada, he performed and recorded with such artists as Marisa Monte, Gilberto Gil, Carlinhos Brown, Yvette Sangalo and Sepultura. In addition to Ologundê, he leads two of his own ensembles in New York: the Brazilian-Cuban fusion group Hãhãhães and his Brazilian percussion ensemble Arrastão do Dendê.

The New York-based Ologundê ensemble celebrates the rich Afro-Brazilian culture of Salvador, Bahia through a diverse repertoire of music and dance. Comprised of Brazilians living in the United States and Brazil, Ologundê includes former members of world-renowned music and dance troupes and is under the direction of noted percussionist Dendê from the famed Timbalada band. The ensemble toured Greece as part of the Cultural Olympiad, appearing at the Kalamata Dance Festival and at the Athens Festival at the Acropolis, and has also performed throughout the US since its formation in 2002.

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