



The Eric Williams Memorial Collection

P.O. Box 561631, Miami, FL 33256-1631, USA*Tel: 305-271-7246*Cell: 305-905-9999*Fax: 305-271-4160

15th Annual FIU Eric Williams Lecture Honors “The Mighty Sparrow”

MIAMI, FL. (October 2, 2013)— The 15th Annual Eric E. Williams Memorial Lecture at Florida International University’s Modesto Maidique Campus (11200 SW 8th Street, Miami, Florida) will take place at the School of Public and International Affairs Lobby/125 (SIPA), on Friday, October 18, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free and open to the public.

This year, the African & African Diaspora Studies Program’s Distinguished Africana Scholars Lecture hosts two prominent speakers: Rawle Gibbons, founding Director of the Centre for Creative and Festival Arts at the University of the West Indies (UWI), and Willard Harris, aka Lord Relator, a seasoned Trinidad and Tobago calypsonian noted for imitation and his ability to sing extemporaneously - “the art of composing impromptu lyrics about any subject, at any time, without previous thought or study.” ***“One From Ten Leaves Nought, Ten To One Is Murder: Eric Williams, The Mighty Sparrow and the Arithmetic of Caribbean Self-Definition”*** promises to address the symbiotic relationship between the two men, and to showcase the development of a national and regional consciousness in Trinidad and Tobago – by means of Williams’ intellectual vision, parlayed into the language of the “street” by “The Calypso King of the World” – Slinger Francisco, aka the Mighty Sparrow.

Media Contact:
Erica Williams Connell
305-905-9999
ewmc@ewmc.tt.org

While Sparrow has had to cancel his appearance, due to illness – and the Lecture pays tribute to his numerous accomplishments spanning 60-plus years – Lord Relator will take up the baton, singing, in counterpoint to Mr. Gibbons’ talk, bars of the Sparrow calypsoes that illustrate his point. In the Q & A that follows, Relator will demonstrate his “extempo” talents with members of the audience.

Rawle Gibbons is an established playwright, stage director and professor at the University of the West Indies. Appointed to devise and head its first academic arts training program in 1986, his theater

productions include, CLR James' "The Black Jacobins" (1975) and Derek Walcott's "Drums and Colours" (1998). His plays are published as "A Calypso Trilogy" (Ian Randle and Canboulay, 1999) and "Love Trilogy" (Canboulay Productions, 2012). Since 2008, Mr Gibbons has been President of the Caribbean Network of Art Presenters, CARIBNET, which spans the French, Spanish, Dutch and English-speaking Caribbean. He also serves as a resource for the regional Caribbean Examinations Council.

Willard Harris has been composing and singing calypsoes – the art of social commentary – in his native Trinidad and Tobago since his early years, winning several local competitions. At a time when the average calypsonian was of a mature age, Relator captivated the nation with his impeccable style and youthful manner. He has performed internationally with major stars Billy Ocean and Jimmy Cliff.

Established in 1999, FIU's annual Eric Williams Lecture honors the distinguished Caribbean statesman Eric E. Williams, first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and Head of Government for a quarter of a century until his death in 1981. He led the country to Independence from Britain in 1962 and onto Republicanism in 1976. A consummate academic and historian, and author of several books, Dr. Williams is best known for his groundbreaking work, the 69-year-old Capitalism and Slavery, which has been translated into seven languages, including Russian, Chinese, Japanese and this year, Turkish and Korean. Popularly referred to as *The Williams Thesis*, this landmark text continues to inform today's ongoing debate and remains "years ahead of its time...this profound critique is still the foundation for studies of imperialism and economic development," according to the *New York Times*.

Among prior Eric Williams Memorial Lecture speakers have been: the late John Hope Franklin, one of America's premier historians of the African-American experience; Kenneth Kaunda, former President of the Republic of Zambia; Cynthia Pratt, Deputy Prime Minister of the Bahamas; Mia Mottley, Attorney General of Barbados; Beverly Anderson-Manley, former First Lady of Jamaica; Portia Simpson Miller, now Prime Minister of Jamaica; the celebrated civil rights activist Angela Davis; and prize-winning Haitian author Edwige Danticat.

The Lecture, which seeks to provide an intellectual forum for the examination of pertinent issues in Caribbean and African Diaspora history and politics, is co-sponsored by FIU: College of Arts and Sciences, School of International and Public Affairs, Latin American and Caribbean Center, AADS Graduate Students Association, Student Government Association; Rhea Mokund Beck; Sandra Bernard-Bastien; Bilmor Advertising – Irvine Headley; Edwards & Partners; Eglantine Gordon Memorial Fund; Glenn Joseph; Joy's Roti Delight; Nina Khell Garcia; Miami Dade College – Prof. Leroy Lashley; Neki Mohan; Saint Lucia; Aryian & Gieowar Singh; Mervyn Solomon; Trinidad and Tobago Independence Ball Committee; Welch,

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Morris & Associates, Ltd; and Christine G. Wray, M.D. The Lecture is also supported by The Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives and Museum at the University of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago campus), which was inaugurated by former **U.S. Secretary of State, Colin L. Powell** in 1998. It was named to **UNESCO's** prestigious *Memory of the World Register* in 1999.

Books/CDs by and about Eric Williams, Rawle Gibbons, the Mighty Sparrow and Lord Relator will be available for purchase and signing at the Lecture.

For more information, please contact 305-348-6860/271-7246 or africana@fiu.edu.

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