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A Dive Into the Arts for Black History Month

By KARIN LIPSON JAN. 30, 2014

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When [Frank Owens](#), a seasoned Broadway pianist and onetime musical director for David Letterman, was invited to play music by the jazz composer [Mary Lou Williams](#) at a [Hofstra University](#) concert celebrating Black History Month, he saw it as a new challenge.

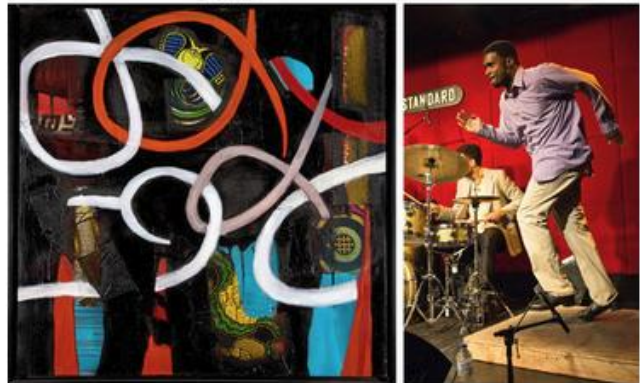
"I've played all facets of music, but never someone of her avant-garde style," Mr. Owens said. He will be demonstrating his mastery of that style at Hofstra on Feb. 9, joining other professional and student performers in "Up South: The Great Migration in Sound and Movement," an exploration in music and dance of the 20th-century African-American exodus from the South to the cities of the North.

With a program that goes from Count Basie to contemporary operas, Hofstra's concert (general admission is \$10) is one of many Long Island events marking black history and culture this month. Here is a sampling of what is planned:

The subject of slavery on Long Island is the focus of several illustrated talks. Mac Griswold, whose 2013 book, "The Manor: Three Centuries at a Slave Plantation on Long Island," recounts the story of [Sylvester Manor](#) on Shelter Island, will tell the story and show slides of the estate several times, starting Feb. 9 at the Ward Melville Heritage Organization Educational and Cultural Center, in the Stony Brook Village Center. (Reservations recommended.)

Ms. Griswold said that at one time, "half the work force on Shelter Island was enslaved." She will also speak at [Peconic Landing](#), the retirement community in Greenport, on Feb. 16; and at the [Cutchogue New Suffolk Free Library](#) on Feb. 22.

The photographer known as [Xiomáro](#) will give an illustrated talk on his photo series "The Other Side — Charles, Caesar, Harry, Sam, Pompey, Lon and Isaac," about the slave burial ground at the William Floyd Estate, in the Angela Koenig Center at the [Oyster Bay Historical Society](#) on Feb. 9.



Clockwise from top left, Tina Andrews, who will perform a one-woman show about Coretta Scott King in Southampton; Caleb Smith's slave cabin in Commack, part of a presentation by Nancy Solomon of Long Island Traditions; the tap dancer Maurice Chestnut, who will perform at the Dix Hills Performing Arts Center; and "Black Is Back," oil on canvas by Danny Simmons, on display at the Southampton Cultural Center, in an exhibition Ms. Andrews curated.

Clockwise from top left, Tabi Cooper; The Library of Congress; Jason Scanes for The New York Times; Guanter Knop

