

Kwe Kwe  
2007

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GUYANA FOLK FESTIVAL

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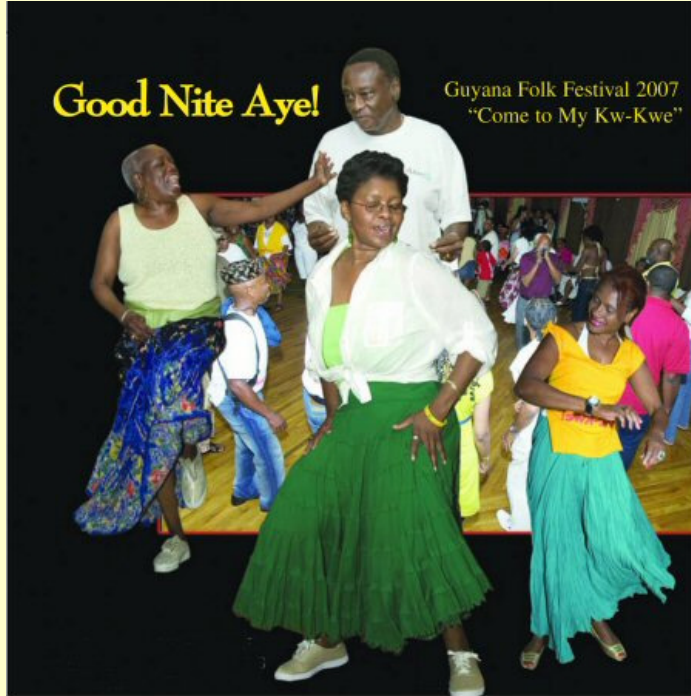
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**Kwe-Kwe Nite 2007!**

Good Nite Aye, Good Nite Oh, Awe Come Cum tell Yuh,  
Good Nite aye!

They came from Buxton, they came from Plaisance, they came from Toronto, and from as far as Venezuela and London. They all came for the Guyana Folk Festival 2007 Kwe-Kwe Nite.

White, Akoyah Rudder, Hilton Hemerding and Winston "Jeggae" Hoppie first demonstrated the "Kwe-Kwe steps" and later brought patrons running from outside to see what was causing the sound made by "jumbie pass."

It was a capacity audience who came prepared to enjoy a night of Guyanese Kwe-Kwe songs and dancing and to "bessy-down" to good old Guyanese Folk songs. From 8.30 p.m. Friday evening to 2.00 a.m. Saturday morning, Guyanese and friends from all parts of the world sang those old familiar folk songs and challenged each other to "show me yuh motion" in the ring. For those unfamiliar with the various stages of the Kwe-Kwe, Kwe-Kwe Master and Lead singer Lio Britton along with Rose October-Edun, Verna

Whether it was an invitation to "sciunce yuh sciunce" join the Kwe-Kwe "Break-dancer" in the ring or screw out the light-bulb to "dii-day-ka-day-koh" Kwe-Kwe Nite 2007 was a nite of community participation and good old GT fun. We had a fine time Kwe-Kwe nite!

**GET A TASTE OF KWE-KWE NITE 2007 ON  
YOUTUBE.COM**

Walcott-

## Come to My Kwe-Kwe

Friday August 31, 2007 7pm - 1am  
 Rising Star Auditorium  
 1234 East 87 Street, (Between Avenues L-M)  
 Canarsie, Brooklyn, NY 11236  
[Click for flyer](#)



Kwe Kwe takes place on the night before the marriage of an African-Guyanese couple. It is an evening of singing, dance, eating and drinking. The purpose of the Kwe Kwe is jollification, emphasizing new relationships created by the union, and, traditionally, to provide instructional and psychological preparation to the bride and groom for married life.

At the start of Kwe Kwe, participants arrange themselves in the house or outside on a specially made wooden floor and the Leader sings the solo parts of the songs which are sung in a call-and-response pattern. A song continues until someone shouts "bato-bato". This is a signal to stop and change a song. A new song can be introduced by any member of the group but it is the Leader who raises the tune.

The main purposes of marriage in the society were and continue to be the continuation of the lineage and the granting of legitimacy to sexual relations. In the communities from which African Guyanese claim their ancestry and traditions, the ability by the mothers or grooms, variously,

was much prized and admired. But virginity on the part of the brides was even more prized giving rise to such songs in the tradition of the Guyanese Kwe Kwe as:

*Woman lie down and the man can't function  
 Wu kinda man laika da, laika da  
 Take yuh calabash, wash yuh bembe  
 Na me shame a yuh Muma shame.*

Although the Kwe Kwe dance is no longer as socially significant as it used to be, the songs provide an important insight into the customs, beliefs, practices and the highly creative ability of older generations of people of African descent for adapting to their new environment, releasing their tensions, and dealing with the problems of everyday life.

Kwe Kwe is still a celebration not only in the secular sense of village unity but in the larger "Guyanese" sense by the incorporation and binding of elements that are African, East Indian and European.

### Stages of the Kwe Kwe Celebration

- A **GANDA** is opened by sprinkling rum on the floor and around the doors and windows, inviting the spirits of the dead to join in the celebration.
- The **GREETING SONG** "Goo Night Ay" is raised by the Tutor or Caller.
- That is followed by the **GENERAL INVITATION** "Come to my Kwe Kwe"
- The **BUYING OF THE BRIDEGROOM**, the advice on matrimonial matters, the demand for a demonstration of the couple's sexual skill "Show Me Yuh Science"
- Ends with the **DEPARTURE SONG** "Las Wan, Las Wan"



See [Come to My Kwe Kwe 2006](#)

**GUYANA FOLK FEST**  
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