



# Kulture Courier



Vol. 1.... No. 4

On-line newsletter of the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation (CBAAC)

December 2009

## 2009 CHILDREN'S PARTY: Minister, Senators Join CBAAC to Chorus "My Culture, My Pride"

"**ALL WORK** no play," the popular saying echoes and re-echoes, "makes Jack a dull boy!" For another year, a major seed of detribalized merry making and patriotism was craftily cultivated for Nigerian children by the Centre for Black and African Civilization, CBAAC. Day was Thursday December 10, 2009.

From all over Lagos and the adjoining Ogun State came children who converged, in their hundreds, at the nation's most visible permanent symbol of culture, National Arts Theatre, Iganmu-Lagos.

For CBAAC, the occasion was essentially a grand way of making children have a feel of the festive season of the Christmas and end of the year period.

Dressed in their best, provoking each other's admiration, the children probably had a far lot more to savour in the decorated surrounding of the complex and more so the inside of the decorated hall for the party.

Towering highest in the entire Ijora-Iganmu stretch is the blinking-lights laden, huge artificial Christmas tree "planted" by one of the CBAAC supporters for the party, Coca-Cola. It was so conspicuous that it availed every arrival to the party with the air of festivity and welcome.

The inside was not any less expressive. Array of chairs for all the guests with the high table neatly endowed with snow-white table cloth and all. With the stage overwhelmed with flood lights, the backdrop curtains glowed relentlessly, even as the sound blaring speakers seemed to enhance the brightness of the curtains blown back and forth by the breeze of the air conditioners. Well ahead of the formal beginning of the party, the children and other guests had no iota of doubt that they were in for a "big deal" as one of the artistes whose songs blared forth had repeatedly sang.

Before food and drinks as well as other shades of entertainment including a stage comedy took over, CBAAC took the opportunity of the party to make children benefit from the words of wisdom of successful daddies and mummies who had come to celebrate with them

From the chairman of the occasion, Senator Grace Folashade Bent to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation, Senator Jibril Bello Gada and the Director General of CBAAC, Prof. Tunde Babawale, the recurring statement was that children being the repository of culture constituted the anchor through which culture could be transmitted from generation to generation. Indeed, the year's celebration is themed "My Culture, My Pride".

The minister, represented by Seyi Womiloju commended the Christmas party initiative and noted that children "represent continuity and our tomorrow". He therefore asked adults to let



Precious Ige

children see "the dazzling qualities in African traditional lifestyle and encourage retention of productive values that are inherent in African culture."

The Grace of the Senate, as Senator Bent is fondly referred to by colleagues, noted in particular that no effort could be as rewarding as taking good care of children. "This is the only way to ensure that the nation's future is not left unattended in our respective domestic environments."

An elated Senator Bent who spiced up her speech with lyrics argued that there was nothing that should make any parent treats the girl child as inferior. Holding the microphone out to the audience, Senator Bent asked if parents who were there would not want their daughters to become senators like her. She further reminded the female parents in particular that it was imperative for them to teach their daughters how to dress decently. "Decent dressing is African culture. Skimpily attires revealing sensitive parts of our body are not our own" she emphasized.

As if to complement Senator Bent's counsel from the male perspective, Senator Yisa Braimah told the large children's population that it was important for them to work hard to

have a bright future. He added that the place of the parents in the life of children was so important that the children must always look forward to impressing and rewarding their parents. To reinforce his assertion, he prevailed on Musician Jimi Solanke, his friend of forty years, to step up to the stage to do a live rendering of one of his popular number numbers, Sweet Mother. In no less rousing atmosphere than Senator Bent's session, all members of the high table moved to the stage to dance to the old tunes.

A seasoned academic, Prof. Babawale emphatically warned against the exclusion of children from cultural events. He drew his argument from a Yoruba philosophy which forewarns that exclusion of children from any given cultural event is the beginning of extinction of that particular culture.

Babawale asserted, "our interest and investments in children are informed more by what they represent- the future- and the fact that children are critical agents of social change." He further noted that ravaging ills in various communities and societies could be corrected by inculcating positive socio-cultural values in the children.

While justifying the choice of "My Culture, My Pride" as the theme for the festival, the DG of CBAAC said it was borne out of the concern for "the widespread lackadaisical

attitude of our youths to those enviable values and ideals that enhance our self worth and self esteem, account for our distinct identity, give credence to our sense of community and gives substance to our very existence as people of class and high moral values."

He also expressed the optimism that "the occasion would offer the opportunity to encourage the children to identify with what is traditionally African and provide them the desired leverage to practically partake of the celebration of African culture, exhibit African costumes and evince useful ideas necessary for decision making."

The Chairman of CBAAC Governing Board, Otunba Semiu Adesina Barkinson, pledged that CBAAC would use every opportunity to redirect people's attention to the beauty of African culture and discourage gangsterism among the youths.

The high point of the occasion was perhaps the cultural display. It featured a competition among no fewer than 30 primary and secondary schools. The apogee of it all was the star performance of an 11- year old Miracle Samson-Ajayi of Nazareth Primary School, Satellite Town. The spectacular performance of Miracle,

– Contd. on page 2

# FOLASHADE BENT: Chairman and Gracious Mother



Senator Bent declaring the exhibition open.

**SHE PROBABLY** could not have had a better name. And the Senate President, Senator David Mark was quick to notice this when he

different at the CBAAC Annual Children Christmas Cultural Festival. Her presence was what was needed to light and kick start the

christened her “the grace of the Senate.”

Senator Grace Folashade Bent is perhaps one of the best examples whose names actually reflect in their personalities and in every event of their lives. Each time she speaks on the floor of the Senate, her presentation is perceived as the needed saving grace of the moment. Yet, she is never seen as being full of herself.

These are truly not different at the CBAAC Annual Children Christmas Cultural Festival. Her presence was what was needed to light and kick start the

programme, to mentor the children and to produce an inspiring performance from the school children. The Senator, who though occupied a high table and a top position by political ranking, came down to the level of the children, drawing them close to herself and leading them in a song!

Betraying an unguarded tendency of a mother, she embraced Miracle Samson-Ajayi and solicited her visitation as guest to her Abuja abode. Miracle's spectacular performance was all that drew her attention. And Senator Grace felt she needed the company of the 11 year old child of Nazareth School particularly for her own biological daughter who according to her also “sings well”. “They should be able to flow together. Possibly train together too” she remarked

“Senator Grace is indeed a woman of substance, an epitome of modesty and a paragon of black and beauty. She appears to remain always herself and never given to frivolities. She is, indeed, not a politician of *come and chop*” noted one of the parents at the part

A typical bridge-builder, she is Yoruba by birth, but Hausa by marriage. She sees herself first as a Nigerian and that is why she is representing the people of Adamawa in Senate. ■

## About CBAAC

The Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) was established by Decree 69 of 1979, following the successful and epoch-making hosting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC'77). The Centre houses all the materials, which constitute the core collections and those artifacts and rare cultural items that were used during FESTAC'77.

To achieve its set goals, CBAAC holds lectures, seminars, symposia, workshops and mounts exhibitions. CBAAC also has a library, an art gallery, a studio, and varied collections of cultural and historical significance to Black and African people all over the world. The Centre also engages in other activities, which project the overall image of Black and African Peoples and enable their cultures to be appreciated globally. Statutorily, the Centre is charged with the responsibility of promoting and propagating Black and African Cultural Heritage in its totality. Through its numerous programmes, the Centre has continued to contribute to the pool of universal knowledge on Black and African Peoples.

### VISION

To be the foremost Agency to encourage, initiate, facilitate and coordinate the retrieval and restoration of the natural and cultural heritage of the Black and African peoples for the purposes of protecting, preserving and projecting them for enhanced understanding and appreciation.

### MISSION STATEMENT

To promote public interest in, understanding and appreciation of Black and African Arts and Culture with a view to emphasizing the contributions of Black and African Peoples to world civilization.

## 2009 CHILDREN'S PARTY: Minister, Senators ...

Contd. from page 1

rendering the song of Brenda Fassie and imitating her dance steps with measured accuracy that was spiced with creativity and audacity, compelled the entire audience to applaud her thunderously. Senator Bent, in particular, immediately requested to have a personal interaction with her. The senator who immediately made for her handbag, brought out some money which she gave her, also announced that Miracle had, with her performance, won “herself a weekend holiday in my house in Abuja”

Seven year old Precious Ige was another star at the event. Precious beat the talking drum to sing the National Anthem. He showed his expertise without any trait of intimidation or shyness. The two children conferred substantial grace on the event as



Prof. Babawale at the event.

they probably influenced Senator Grace to institutionalize Senator's Trophy for the Best Behaved and most Culturally Correct School from next year.

Miracle's school, Nazaret School, eventually came first in the primary school category. The secondary schools were led by Penny International College, Orile. Emerging the best in the art exhibition were Glorious Blessing School and Holy Child College in the primary and secondary school categories respectively.

Among other dignitaries at the event are the renowned literary matriarch and pioneer Literature Prize winner of the Liquefied Natural Gas, LNG, Prof. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo who teaches at the University of Lagos, as well as the representative of Minister of Culture, Tourism and National Orientation, Seyi Womilaju. ■



Kulture Courier is published by the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation (CBAAC)

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Concept, Production and Design by DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS CONSULT | 08033147516, 08073996666