Sixth Annual Samba Fest at Hartford Riverfront
Brazilian and Connecticut Artists Join Forces on Saturday, May 5

Hartford, Conn. (April 3, 2012) – Cascades of exuberant rhythms will soar in downtown Hartford at the sixth annual Trinity Samba Fest, taking place on Saturday, May 5, from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., at Mortensen Riverfront Plaza, 300 Columbus Boulevard.

**Admission is free** to this family-friendly event, produced in partnership with Riverfront Recapture. Rain or shine, the show will go on.

“Music and dance from Brazil to Peru to Puerto Rico and beyond show common threads among these cultural expressions,” says Eric Galm, who conceived and produces Samba Fest. The Trinity College professor of music and ethnomusicology continued, “Vibrant, live music and dance is a way that we can learn about our hemisphere and its history. Highlighting these connections throughout the African diaspora in the Americas enables us to understand how James Brown, bomba, samba, and salsa move and groove together.”

Brazil’s Berimbrown, a nine-member, Afro-fusion band from Minas Gerais, returns to Samba Fest for the third consecutive year, this time with special guest Dinho Nascimento from Bahia. (Together they make their New York City debuts at S.O.B.’s – also known as Sounds of Brazil – on April 28.) Berimbrown and Nascimento, a percussionist and singer, are highly regarded for innovative blends of North American funk, soul, and reggae with regional and historical Brazilian references.

The Trinity Samba Ensemble, directed by ethnomusicologist and professor Eric Galm, performs, and they will be joined by Brazilian vocalist José Paulo. New Haven’s Ginga Brasileira will demonstrate the Afro-Brazilian martial art of capoeira and the “stick dance” called maculelê, which originated with enslaved Africans toiling in Brazilian sugar plantations.

Local celebrity trumpeter and salsa bandleader Ray González conducts “Ray Gonzalez y su Conjunto Antillano” and the youth ensemble Guakibom Jazz. Hartford’s Negrura Peruana performs traditional music and dance of Peru’s African and Creole population originating in the coastal region south of Lima. The Willimantic-based Bomba Ashe performs quintessential Puerto Rican folk music and song forms, bomba and plena.
The Artists Collective African Connection Dance and Drum Ensemble will demonstrate West African dance.

The duo JuggleJoy is teaching circus-oriented dexterity skills throughout the afternoon. Samba Fest also features crafts activities and movement-based games for children (organized by Trinity College student groups).

The Trinity Samba Fest is free and open to the public. For directions and parking information, and additional information about the participating artists and styles of music, visit sambafest.com. For general information, call 860-297-2199.

Samba Fest is supported by the City of Hartford Arts & Heritage Jobs Grant Program, Pedro E. Segarra, Mayor; Greater Hartford Arts Council; Trinity College’s Austin Arts Center Guest Artist Series, Department of Music, Center for Urban and Global Studies Arts Initiative, offices of Community Relations, Multicultural Affairs, and Campus Life, Trinfo.Café, and WRTK 89.3 FM. Additional support is provided by the UConn Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, the Governo de Minas/Programa Música Minas, and the Consulate General of Brazil.

Founded in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1823, Trinity College (www.trincoll.edu) is an independent, nonsectarian liberal arts college with over 2,200 students from 45 states and 47 countries. It is home to the eighth-oldest chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in the United States. The faculty and alumni include recipients of the Pulitzer Prize, the MacArthur Award, Guggenheims, Rockefellers, and other national academic awards. Trinity students integrate meaningful academic and leadership experience at all levels on the College’s celebrated campus, in the Capital City of Hartford, and in communities all over the world.

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About the Artists

Berimbrown (berimbrown.com.br) is an Afro-fusion band from Minas Gerais, Brazil. This is their third consecutive United States tour since 2010, facilitated through a partnership with Trinity College in Hartford, where they have performed as the headline ensemble for Samba Fest. Berimbrown blends North American funk, soul, and reggae with regional and historical Brazilian references. Berimbrown has performed and recorded with Brazilian international music stars Milton Nascimento and Gilberto Gil, among others, and the band is currently recording the album “Volta do Mundo Camará/Around the World Camará.”

The band’s repertory includes original compositions and reinterpretations of seminal Brazilian songs featuring lyrics that combine social criticism with uplifting, celebratory messages concerning human rights. Berimbrown was founded in 1997 by Mestre Negoativo as an adaptation of a community-based sociocultural and artistic project in the working class Maria Goretti neighborhood of Belo Horizonte, in the state of Minas Gerais. The ensemble’s aim is to identify and preserve Brazil’s African cultural roots and to promote citizenship through its art. Berimbrown’s music is explored within historical and

**Dinho Nascimento (dinhonascimento.com.br)** has been a maverick of Brazilian music for over 30 years. His music can be heard on the internationally released “The Rough Guide to Brazil” compilation recordings, and his 2004 album “Berimbau Blues” won the Sharp Prize (a Brazilian equivalent of the Grammy award). His music blends voice with the *berimbau* (a single-string musical bow) and drums, and summons the essence of roots music within the folkloric rhythms of *capoeira*, *coco*, *samba de roda*, *maracatu*, and *jangó*, intertwined with elements of reggae, funk, and other world music genres. Born in 1951 in Salvador, Bahia, Nascimento grew up with popular music and culture that emerged from the streets. He studied composition at the Free Seminar in Music (now part of the Federal University of Bahia). In 1973, he began performing professionally with the group *Arembepe*. As percussionist, Nascimento participated in musical projects with prominent Brazilian musicians João Donato, Tom Zé, Pena Branca & Xavantinho, Renato Teixeira, Zé Ketti, Batatinha, Clementina de Jesus, Alcione, “Banda de pífanos de Caruaru,” Berimbrown, Luis Wagner, Renato Borguetti, Osvaldinho da Cuica, and Marcos Suzano. He has created musical instruments, such as the Berimbum, a bass *berimbau* that uses an electric bass string as opposed to a steel wire. Nascimento is also engaged in several educational arts-based partnership community projects in the “Morro do Querosene” neighborhood. He is included in the encyclopedia "Popular Music of the World" (Richard P. Graham and N. Scott Robinson) and *The Berimbau: Soul of Brazilian Music* (Eric A. Galm, University Press of Mississippi, 2010).

**The Trinity Samba Ensemble** is an academic course in which students (musicians and non-musicians) learn Brazilian culture through its music and rhythms. They perform participatory call-and-response songs in Portuguese for non-Portuguese speaking audiences. The Samba Ensemble plays a variety of percussion instruments, including the *surdo* (similar to a bass drum); *tamborim* (small frame drum); *agogô* (double-bell); and *ganzá* (shaker). The group takes musical cues from the *repinique*, the “master drum,” supported by guitar, bass, and other instruments, which add harmonic layers to the multi-part vocals and rhythms. The Samba Ensemble has performed at a variety of festivals and concerts in New England.

**Eric Galm**, who conceived and produces Samba Fest, is Associate Professor of Music and Ethnomusicology at Trinity College, where he directs the Samba Ensemble and is the coordinator for the music track of the Trinity in Trinidad Global Learning Site. In April 2006, he was elected president of the Society for Ethnomusicology’s Northeast Chapter. He has lived, studied and traveled extensively throughout Brazil, and has conducted research in Cuba and Trinidad. He holds degrees in ethnomusicology from Wesleyan and Tufts universities, percussion performance from the University of Michigan, and performance certificates from the *Escola Brasileira de Música* and the *Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro* in Brazil.

**José Paulo** grew up singing with the Salgueiro samba school in Rio de Janeiro. His debut CD, “Canzoni Stonate,” was released by Albatroz Music/Sony Music International in
November 2008. Named “Outstanding Brazilian Male Singer in the United States” by the Brazilian Press Awards in 2009, Paulo is a featured performer on a forthcoming CD by Brazilian singing star Roberto Carlos. He has been a featured performer on Brazilian Day Canada in September 2010 and 2011.

**Ginga Brasileira Dance Company**, based in New Haven, is led by Efraim Silva, the 1988 Brazilian national champion of Capoeira. Born in Guarujá, São Paulo, Silva was awarded state and federal certification as a professional musician and rhythmist, and he opened his first Capoeira academy in Bragança Paulista, São Paulo, in 1985.

**Ray González** has nearly 40 years of experience as a trumpeter, conductor, arranger and composer. Gonzalez has worked with Tito Puente, Charlie Palmieri, Kako, Victor Paz, Giovanni Hidalgo, Charlie Sepúlveda, and Ismael Rivera, among others. The Hartford Symphony Orchestra and the New Haven Symphony Orchestra have commissioned works from him. He serves as music director for Hartford’s Guakía, Inc., and Guakía’s youth Latin jazz orchestra, Guakibom Jazz.

**Negrura Peruana** made its debut in 2002 at Central Connecticut State University. Group members, who emigrated from Lima to Greater Hartford roughly 17 to 20 years ago, learned their music, dances, and songs in Peru, where music and dance is central to family gatherings and neighborhood celebrations. The music uses traditional percussion instruments: the *cajón*, a wooden box that the musician sits on and drums; the *quijada de burro*, the jaw of a horse or donkey; the *campana*, a cowbell; and *bongos*. Recently the group has added guitar to the instrumentation. The ensemble consists of four musicians and four dancers. Song and dance styles include the *Festejo*, *Landó*, *Alcatraz*, and *Zamacueca*, representative of Afro-Peruvian culture.

**Bomba Ashe** is led by Roberto Cepeda, born in 1952 into the famous Puerto Rican folklore institution, La Familia Cepeda. His father, Don Rafael Cepeda, and his mother Doña Caridad Brenes, were the pioneers who introduced Puerto Rico’s Bomba and Plena to stages and theaters around the world. With the Willimantic-based Bomba Ashe, Cepeda endeavors to continue the tradition of this great art form. He performs extensively with his group, offering master classes and workshops on drumming and dancing, as well as performing with leading Puerto Rican artists.

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