

Jamaica's food on show at Music Fest

It may have top names like Shaggy, Shabba Ranks and Marcia Griffiths on this year's card, but organisers of Brooklyn Music Festival (BMF) are looking to add a little taste to the event.

Jamaican cuisine, which has a large following throughout New York City, will be on show at the third staging of the event which takes place July 4 at the Aviator Sports and Recreation Center.

"The restaurants which will be there are mainly Jamaican, we expect it to be a nice day for them because no vendors will be allowed," George Crooks, promoter of the show, said.

Yellowman, Tony Rebel, Assassin and Daville are some of the other musical acts scheduled to perform at the BMF. But Crooks says the main thrust of the show is to highlight Jamaican commerce.

"We would love to see more Jamaican companies get involved. We've approached several of them but they have been slow in responding," Crooks said.

Music and the showcasing of Caribbean products have been a theme of shows Crooks has promoted in the past, the best known being the Islands In The Park series which took place in major American locations like Washington, D.C., and Atlanta.

The Islands In The Park shows first took place about 10 years ago when Jamaican culture was reaching a new demographic in the United States.

Dancehall got a second wind through Sean Paul and Shaggy, while jerk seasoning was the rage among celebrities and high-profile chefs.

Westmoreland-born, Crooks has been promoting live events in the United States for close to two decades. Reggae Carifest and the New York Music Festival are other shows he has been associated with.

The Brooklyn Music Festival will not be limited to contemporary acts. In addition to Griffiths, who started her career in the late 1960s, the New York Ska Assembly, Rudie Crew and Brown Rice Family Band, all ska units, are down to perform.