

NY CULTURE

'Inspiration Overload'

By **REBECCA BRATBURD**

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A group of fresh-faced musicians piled into a cozy auditorium for a lecture with Parliament Funkadelic musician and one of Red Bull Music Academy's first lecturers, Bernie Worrell, earlier this week as a part of the company's monthlong festivities.



Erykah Badu performs. *DAN WILTON/RED BULL*

By day, RBMA, back in New York for the first time since 2001, is a retreat of sorts for the participating musicians (more than 4,000 musicians applied from 90 countries for the 62 spots). By night, it consists of five weeks of concerts, public talks with esteemed entertainers and art exhibitions.

"Everyone here has a gift," Mr. Worrell said, addressing the

audience during his Q&A with RBMA co-founder Torsten Schmidt.

Between sharing war stories and offering advice to the young musicians—"If you want everything to be all right, don't be so uptight. Breathe."—Mr. Worrell played songs on a vintage keyboard.



Many Ameri. *PHILIP MONTGOMERY FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

Kieran Hebden, who composes electronic music under the moniker Four Tet, attended the lecture. He has a RBMA-sponsored concert on May 8 and is a music tutor to the participants. "When you see guys like Bernie, he's all about making good music. Nothing must get in the way of that," Mr. Hebden said. "It's important to listen to people like that. To sit in a room and have him play for you is a very

enchanting, inspiring thing."

Across the four floors of the RBMA facility in Chelsea, participants have access to the professional recording studio stocked with both analog gear from '60s, '70s and '80s and

cutting-edge digital recording equipment, as well as the eight scaled-back "bedroom studios." While there are no assignments or exams, participants must attend the lectures.

"There's definitely an inspiration and information overload that goes on," RBMA co-founder Many Ameri said.

As for RBMA's New York homecoming: "There's probably no other city with more alumni or lecturers," Mr. Ameri said. "The lectures and events we're hosting are a nod to New York. While we present a lot of international content, there's probably never been a higher proportion of local lecturers."



An installation by Martin Roth. PHILIP MONTGOMERY FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

On Tuesday evening, hundreds of fans attended a public talk with singer-songwriter Erykah Badu at Brooklyn Museum. From a canary-yellow couch onstage, Ms. Badu answered the audience's questions and gave some humorous advice.

"Two wrongs don't make a right, but it sure do get your money back," Ms. Badu offered. By the end of the session, she had invited 30 or 40 star-struck fans to mingle onstage.

RBMA on Tuesday closed with a show featuring talent from the Los Angeles record label Brainfeeder and a DJ set from Ms. Badu at Music Hall of Williamsburg.

The lectures, studio time and concerts will continue through May 31.

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