



## **Con Edison Celebrates Black History Month With Free Series For Students And Benefit Concert At The Apollo Theatre**

February 4, 2000

A stellar concert featuring the Grammy-Award winning musical group, "Sounds of Blackness," highlights this year's Black History Month celebration sponsored by Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. The celebration continues with a series of exciting performances by the Ishangi Family African Dancers.

### **APOLLO THEATRE**

On Saturday, February 5 at 8 p.m. at the legendary Apollo Theatre in Harlem, Con Edison co-hosts Concert 2000, a benefit event presented by the Catholic Archdiocese of New York, Office of Black Ministry. His Eminence John Cardinal O'Connor, the Archbishop of New York, and notable actor Ossie Davis open the program with two-time Grammy winners, "Sounds of Blackness." The group has recorded with artists ranging from Sting and Stevie Wonder to Elton John and Quincy Jones.

The Cardinal Spellman High School Choir will join the headliners, along with The Children of St. Benedict's Day Nursery and other local gospel performers. All proceeds from the concert will benefit various educational programs for the African-American community of the Archdiocese, including elementary and secondary schools. Among them is Rice High School, the only Catholic high school in Harlem. Rice is a participant in Con Edison's employee-student mentoring program where employees help students with their reading and writing skills.

### **ISHANGI DANCE TROUPE**

Continuing a four-year tradition, Con Edison joins Town Hall, located at 123 West 43rd Street in Manhattan, in presenting a free Black History Month Festival for New York City schoolchildren.

Students in grades three through eight will marvel at the Ishangi Family African Dancers. Along with original dance performances, the group will educate the students about the authentic customs, legends and history of West Africa. The three-day festival combines a unique blend of music, dance and narration. The series will be held at Town Hall on February 9, 16 and 17. There are two daily shows at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

"In the spirit of Black History Month, it is important to show young children how much influence African customs have on contemporary trends," said Frances A. Resheske, vice president of public affairs at Con Edison. "Con Edison is proud to sponsor these programs that inspire children to apply creativity in their own lives," she added.

More than 9,000 students representing 79 schools will participate in the festival. Each student will be afforded a chance to win cash prizes in a poster/essay contest sponsored by Con Edison and the nonprofit Town Hall. The poster contest theme is African-Americans in music. An optional essay theme encourages students to explore the role that African-Americans have played in influencing American music. The style variations may span from jazz, blues, and gospel to hip-hop and rap. Five winners will be selected and will be honored at an awards ceremony at Con Edison Headquarters at 4 Irving Place in Manhattan.

Con Edison is one of the nation's largest utility companies, with approximately \$7 billion in annual revenues and approximately \$14 billion in assets. The company, a subsidiary of Consolidated Edison Inc., provides electric, gas and steam service to more than three million customers in New York City and Westchester County, New York. For additional financial, operations and customer service information, visit Con Edison's web site at [www.coned.com](http://www.coned.com).