

'Boogie Down Booth' Returns to South Bronx

By [Eddie Small](#) | July 14, 2015 4:27pm

SOUTH BRONX — Relax, the boogie has returned to The Bronx.

Take a load off and enjoy a mix of salsa, hip-hop, jazz and Garifuna music at the second-coming of “Boogie Down Booth,” which was unveiled Tuesday at its new location.



Photo by Jordan Guerra

The structure is now located by the subway at 174th Street and Southern Boulevard where residents can sit down and relax while listening to music that represents the rich cultural heritage of The Bronx.

The project is a sequel of sorts to [the original “Boogie Down Booth,”](#) which was installed last July underneath the Freeman Street subway station as part of the [Design Trust for Public Space’s](#) “Under the Elevated” initiative, which aimed to develop spaces below New York’s elevated highway, subway and rail lines.

That booth, located under the Freeman Street subway stop, was [dismantled in November,](#) but the [Women's Housing and Economic Development](#)

[Corporation](#) partnered with the [Parks Department](#) to bring a new one to the borough that uses several recycled materials from the first, such as panels, speakers and wood.

The structure includes several features that were not part of the original booth, including a community bulletin board for postings about local events and a mural painted by kids from [East Bronx Academy for the Future](#) and the [Children's Aid Society](#).

"They picked up right where they left off," said James Mettham, an assistant commissioner at the [Department of Small Business Services](#), which helped finance the project. "This is a bigger and better version of the 'Boogie Down Booth.'"

The booth plays a total of 17 songs by Bronx-based artists in genres ranging from salsa to hip-hop to jazz. Tracks include "Welcome to the Powwow" by Chief 69, "What's the Use" by Jimmy Owens and "Intense!!" by Gilberto "Pulpo" Colón.

The opening of the booth concluded with a song by James Lovell and Alex Kwabena Colon-Olaniyan, two Garifuna musicians who used the opportunity to try teaching the audience [how to speak their native language](#).

[Vine: Garifuna music at the opening of Boogie Down Booth part II](#)

This booth will stay open until July 2016, and WHEDco hopes to install a third one at their [Bronx Commons](#) project by 163rd Street and Brook Avenue this fall.

The initial "Boogie Down Booth" saw about 1,500 interactions each week, according to WHEDco.

The new booth is located right by [Seabury Park](#), which the Parks Department has targeted for improvements, and [Commissioner Mitchell Silver](#) described it as a fantastic amenity for the neighborhood.

"The 'Boogie Down Booth' both beautifies the street, distracts from the loud noise — just imagine when you look at the booth, there's no noise around us — and offers an interactive engaging experience for curious New Yorkers of all ages who are looking for a way to connect with their present but also with their past," he said.

The playlist for the booth was put together by WHEDco's [Bronx Music Heritage Center](#), and Elena Martinez, co-artistic director of the center, said she viewed the songs as a good way to counteract always listening to the same tracks on the radio.

"People don't get a chance to hear all the great music that we have coming from all the different people who live right in our own neighborhood," she said. "We hear the same things on the radio all the time. Hopefully, this is a little bit of a remedy to that."

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