

IN TRANSIT

by Don Kinch
Directed by Joseph Mydell
Music by Stefan René



A NEW INITIATIVE IN THEATRE

The growing reputation of Britain's black theatre scene will be further enhanced in June when a new music theatre group composed of young actors from minority ethnic groups in Britain makes its debut with the premiere of a new show, **IN TRANSIT**, which has been specially written for the company.

IN TRANSIT, a musical presenting a vision of the feelings of black people moving from Africa to the West Indies to Britain, is written by **Don Kinch** (script) and **Stephen Rene** (music), directed by **Joseph Mydell** and designed by **Nick Chapman**. The show is presented by the Music Theatre Project (based at the Commonwealth Institute) and the Staunch Poets and Players. This project represents an extended period of workshops led by black American actor, **Joseph Mydell**, to enable young actors, dancers and musicians from minority ethnic groups in Britain to experience the latest techniques in contemporary theatre. The project is sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Mydell, who has awards from the Eugene O'Neill Foundation and Edinburgh's "Fringe First" to his credit, has made a particular study of the techniques of Polish director Grotowski with Andre Gregory in the 'States. He is best known in Britain for his acclaimed one-man show "Lyrics of the Hearthside", based on the writings of the nineteenth century black American writer, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, who toured Britain in the 1890's.

“IN TRANSIT”

In October 1980 the Commonwealth Institute was able—thanks to a grant from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation—to offer Joseph Mydell an eight-month attachment to the Arts Department to enable him to pursue a research project in the performing arts.

That period of exploration and discussion has led to this Music Theatre Project.

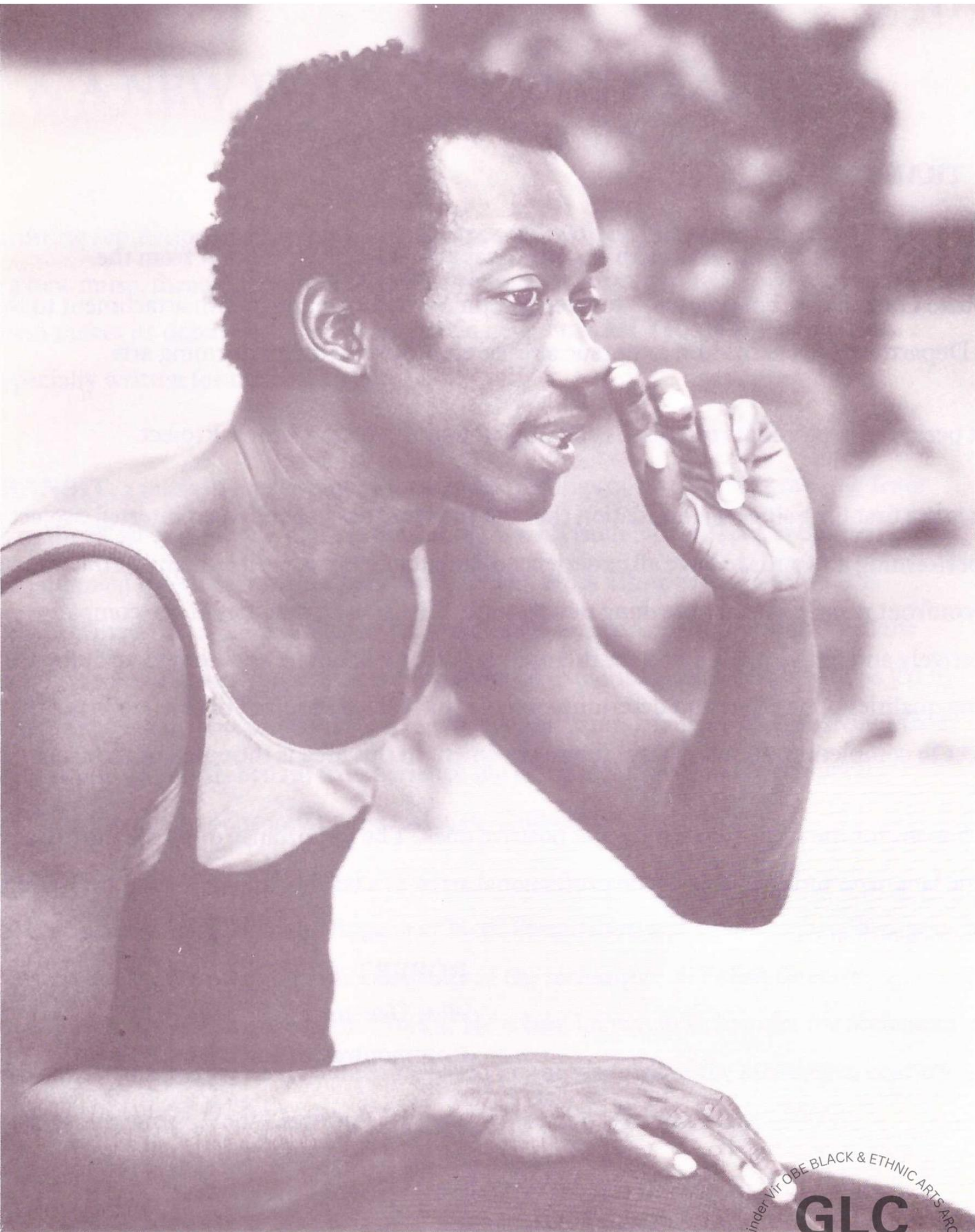
This is the first time since its foundation that the Institute has generated an internal project in the performing arts and we have all experienced the excitement as well as many of the difficulties that confront people who are breaking new ground. The artistic qualities of the company collectively and individually stand for themselves. What will not be apparent to an audience are the qualities of patience and determination that have been required of them to bring the project to completion. In many ways the achievement in this area is the equal of the artistic one.

The lessons for the future are strong and positive ones. The importance of music theatre as an artistic language and the value of the professional artist as a teacher and animator are amongst the most necessary.

ROBERT ATKINS

Arts Director

Commonwealth Institute



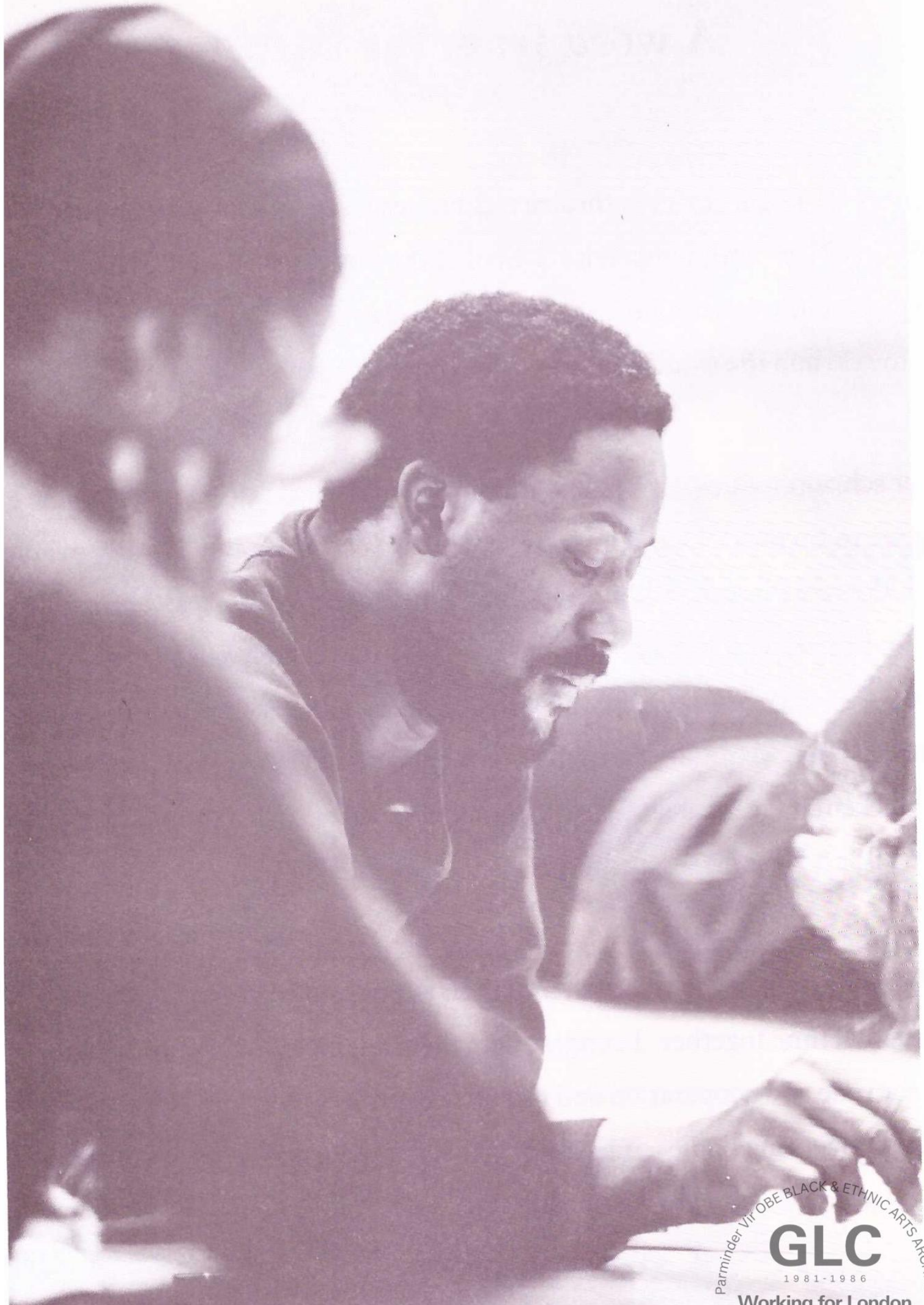
A word from the Director

To train a group of young actors in theatre techniques is a presumptuous venture. I was trained in the late sixties (New York University School of the Arts) in traditional voice, movement and acting. Taught by American and British tutors as well as trained in the then new and experimental work of Grotowski and the wonderfully insane Andre Gregory.

After a rather schizophrenic four years of training, I embarked upon a professional career that has brought me to England, Don Kinch and a group of energetic and friendly people called The Staunch Poets & Players. Adding a few more members, Musicians, Tutors, Robert Atkins enthusiasm for the project, and a grant from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, we began a journey of creative work beginning with intensive workshops for four months, ending with a six week rehearsal period leading up to the production of IN TRANSIT. All of this work took place at the weekends and weekends are not enough time for such a project, but lack of funds necessitated this less than ideal schedule.

However, the dedication of the company and their support of each other compensated for what we lacked in actual time together. I congratulate them all, including the musicians whom I fought with for time and cooperation and though the project met with setbacks and broken promises by art governing bodies, it has been in every aspect, a worthy and successful experience. I am proud to have been asked to participate.

Joseph Mydell



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A word from the Author

Writing a play or indeed anything has never before appeared so attractive and exciting.

Writing a play about the experiences of black people should, I have always believed, go beyond mere description and say something about what it feels like to be a part of that experience.

Therefore, the play is about the feelings, the spirit of a people and their adaptation to whatever environment they found themselves in.

Looking back to my first meeting with Joseph Mydell, I can only say that that meeting was both timely and productive, and it is his interpretation, skill and insight which is the final production.

I am extremely grateful to The Staunch Poets & Players theatre group, of which I am a member, for providing me with a framework through which my work has found expression.

My thanks to the other members of the company, whose belief in and desire to perform “IN TRANSIT” has transformed what was no more than a good idea nine months ago, into a theatrical reality tonight.

Don Kinch



3. Workshop – Joseph Mydell with Kendell Smith



4. *Workshop* – Caron Rose, Kendell Smith and Pervaiz Khan



5. Workshop – Maureen Hawkins

CAST LIST

Jimmy Rose (Staunch Poets & Players)	Kathi Coaston
Angeli James	Maureen Hawkins (Staunch)
Kendell Smith	Pervaiz Khan
Hazel Williams (Staunch)	Caron Rose (Staunch)
Monica Rene	

MUSICIANS

Stefan Rene	– Guitar, Percussion
Frank Ince	– Congo
Steve Orett	– Kit Drums
Fabian Anderson	– Bongo
Keith Harry	– Acoustics Guitar
Wesley Clark	– Bass Guitar
Alan Hayman	– Congo, Percussion

STAGE MANAGER

Paul Cockle

ASST. STAGE MANAGER

Ann Duncan

LIGHTING OPERATOR

Nick Nickerson

SOUND OPERATOR

Matt Corbett

LIGHTING CREW

Rod Birtles (Design)
Ian Watts
Ian Gibson
Irvine Walrond

STAGE CREW

Ann Hillyer
Neil McDonald
Peter McCullech

CHOREOGRAPHER

Maggie Potter

DANCE MISTRESS

Hazel Williams

SET & POSTER DESIGN

Nick Chapman

COSTUMES by Diane Estelle-Smith

IN TRANSIT by Don Kinch

The Commonwealth Institute Music Theatre Project Production

Directed by **Joseph Mydell** Music – **Stefan Rene** Lyrics – **Don Kinch**

ACT 1 – SCENE 1 AFRICA

Girl Bride	CARON ROSE
Mother	MAUREEN HAWKINS
Lady-in-Waiting	KATHI COASTON
Female Attendants	HAZEL WILLIAMS
	ANGELI JAMES
	MONICA RENE
Groom	JIMMY ROSE
Male Attendants	PERVAIZ KHAN
	KENDELL SMITH

CELEBRATION RITUAL DANCE

	MAUREEN HAWKINS
	KATHI COASTON
Girl Bride	CARON ROSE
Groom	JIMMY ROSE

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE PERVAIZ KHAN

ACT 1 – SCENE 2 WEST INDIES

Elaine	ANGELI JAMES
Ivan	KENDELL SMITH

“Sunshine Hot Today” – Elaine

ACT 1 – SCENE 3 SHANGO RITUAL

Shango Dancer	HAZEL WILLIAMS
Shango Priest	PERVAIZ KHAN

ACT 1 – SCENE 4 MARKET

Candy McCann	JIMMY ROSE
Ma Rose	MAUREEN HAWKINS
Edna	MONICA RENE
Doris	HAZEL WILLIAMS
Marcus	KENDELL SMITH
Girl	CARON ROSE

“Grounded for the Night” – Candy McCann

“Child of the Night – Girl and vendors

INTERMISSION

ACT 2 – SCENE 1 LONDON

Zachi	JIMMY ROSE
City People and	PERVAIZ KHAN
Ghosts	HAZEL WILLIAMS
	CARON ROSE
	MAUREEN HAWKINS
The Blonde	MONICA RENE
The Radical	KATHI COASTON
Asylum Attendants	NEIL McDONALD
	ANN WILLYER

“In Transit” – Company

“Circles” – Stefan Rene

ACT 2 – SCENE 2 HOME

Janet	ANGELI JAMES
Winston	KENDELL SMITH
Miss Mary	MAUREEN HAWKINS
“If I could”	Miss Mary Piano – Stefan Rene
Man	JIMMY ROSE
Muggers	KENDELL SMITH
	PERVAIZ KHAN

ACT 3 – SCENE 3

“Narration” – Company

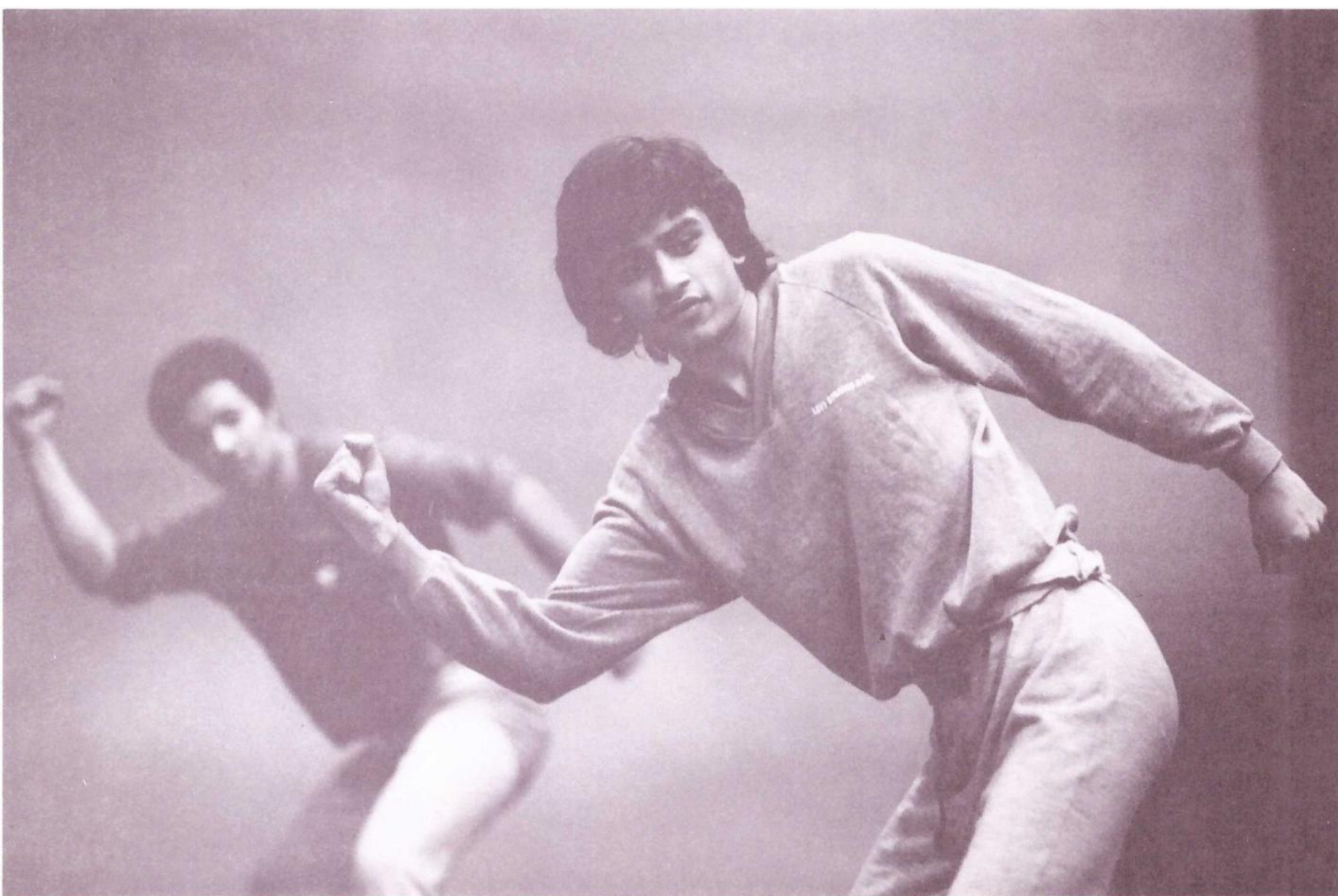
“In Transit” – Company

FINALE

“Fruit of the New Nation” – Janet and Company



6. Rehearsals – Maureen Hawkins and Hazel Williams



7. Rehearsals – Pervaiz Khan and Jimmy Rose



8. Rehearsals – Kathi Coaston



9. First Day of Rehearsal: Maggie Potter Joseph Mydell Kendell Smith Nick Chapman



10. Composer: Stefan Rene



11. Choreographer: Maggie Potter

The Commonwealth Institute Music Theatre Project Production

The Commonwealth Institute wishes to acknowledge with thanks the financial support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Greater London Council.

Photographs by Brian Wigginton

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LIGHTING DESIGN BY

THESBOS

Theatrical Design and Consultancy

Rod Bistles
Ian Gibson
Ian Watts

199 Mount Pleasant Road
Tottenham
LONDON N17

LYRICS OF THE HEARTHIDE

by

JOSEPH MYDELL

Joseph Mydell's dramatic impersonation of Paul Laurence Dunbar is a classic. Working with an almost delicate precision, Mydell elevates the material with a dazzling performance of wit and charm.

The Guardian

Lively, absorbing and perfectly judged performancefascinating portrait of a man and his society through powerful theatrical imagination.

Time Out

Haunting, disturbingly contemporary....simply not long enough.

Times Educational Supplement

Strikingly brilliant....Mydell is an intellectual, elegant and often hilarious performer. (Winner of The Scotsman Fringe First Award, 1980)

The Scotsman

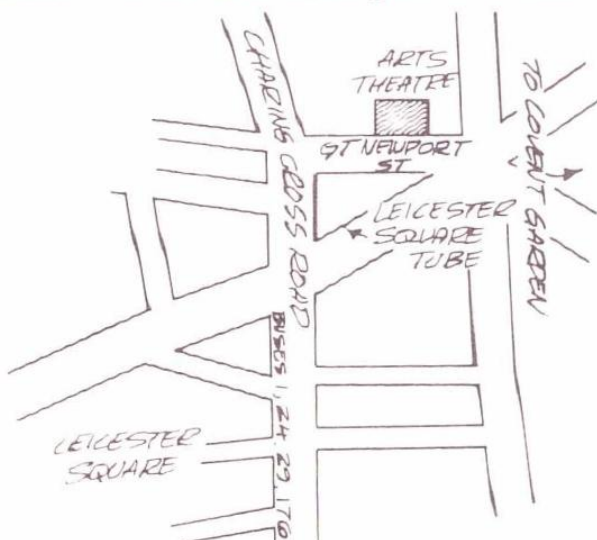
Gripping, funny, moving and highly professional both in performance and technically....A theatrical experience...He is Paul Laurence Dunbar. (Awarded for "The best Solo-performance" by Festival Times at the 1980 Edinburgh Fringe Festival.)

Festival Times

Outrageously talented....his gracefulness, command and spirit are unassailably inspiring....just too good to be missed.

West Indian World

Joseph Mydell as Paul Laurence Dunbar in "Lyrics of the Hearthside" puts poems, prose and songs of Dunbar together in an evening of highly impersonation: Dunbar alive...Dunbar on stage...Dunbar performing his works as he did throughout America and England. In England he collaborated with British composer Samuel Coleridge on a song cycle and an operetta and wrote lyrics for the Broadway show "In Dahomey" which came to London's Shaftesbury Theatre and later had a command performance at Buckingham Palace.



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