

Transcript of the Remembering Slavery 2007 Freedom Performance 17th May 2007 at Dance City, Newcastle upon Tyne

00.32: KuKu

Nansady Keita (drummer) and Sens Sagna (dancer) speak to each other in Malinké and then Sens begins to sing. The group ('Drummed Up') sing in response as they arrive to work in the fields. This is followed by joyful and enthusiastic drumming and dancing.

08.52: *[Loud applause and cheering.]*

08.54: Arrival of the slave traders

There is discordant drumming and some shouts and screams as the group make their way offstage.

09.21: *[Loud applause and cheering.]*

09.24: I shall defend my house of laughter (performed by Sheree Mack)

"I shall defend my house of laughter
Against the scorn of oppression,
The whip of legislation.
I shall defend my house of laughter.
I shall lose my sight,
I shall lose my dignity.
But I shall defend my house of laughter.
They will take me away
To another land,
To another way of life,
To another time and space.
I shall defend my house of laughter.
They will abuse me,
Make jest of me,
Refuse my every wish.
I shall die in this pursuit,
In this pursuit of freedom,
In this pursuit of happiness.
But I shall defend my house of laughter."

10.37: *[Loud applause.]*

10.47: The Passage

Rapid and urgent drumming with shouts from the drum leader.

11.55: Drum leader: "One, two, three!" Rapid and urgent drumming and clapping with regular shouts from the drum leader.

15.21: Drum leader: "I want you to put your hands in the air for these people here!"
[Applause and cheering from the audience.]

16.00: *[Loud applause and cheering.]*

16.05: *[Drum roll]* The drum leader counts down – "One, two, three, four and ..!"
[Drumming stops - loud applause and cheering.]

16.20: *[Loud applause and cheering.]*

17.08: The Caribbean Landing

17.15: The sound of one long and two short bursts of a whistle in the darkness, followed by a rapid single drum. Further bursts of two short whistles interspersed with the drumming.

18.00: Drum leader: "Now ... *[The audience start to clap]* ... Hold tight. I must tell you that it's been a very short time I work with all these people – and as you can see, some of them are ... slightly ... *[bangs his drum once - the actual word that he speaks cannot be made out]* yeah? So I really wanted to give these people a round of applause because I think they are great people and I hope you do as well, OK? *[Pause]* Can I have my chair please? *[Laughter ... chair is brought on]* Well ...? *[Laughter and clapping]* One! Two! Three!" *[Rapid and insistent drumming – drum leader calls out words (the words he shouts cannot easily be made out) and the drummers respond. This is repeated throughout the piece.]*

23.35: *[Loud applause and cheering from the audience.]*

24.15: Drum leader: "Ladies and gentlemen – 'Fighting Fit' y'all!" *[Clapping and screams from the audience. The dancers from 'Fighting Fit' move onto the stage to the sound of the same rapid and insistent drumming and the calls of the drum leader.]*

30.07: *[Loud applause and cheering from the audience.]*

30.35: *[Loud applause, cheering and screaming from the audience.]*

31.00: *[Loud applause, cheering and screaming from the audience.]*

31.11: The drum leader shouts and the drumming stops abruptly.

31.13: *[Loud applause and cheering from the audience.]*

31.31: Drum leader: "Everyone, clap along!" *[Audience clap along in time with his drumming, followed by loud applause and cheering.]*

32.06: Drum leader: "Thank you!"

32.10: My Culture (performed by Sheree Mack)

“‘My Culture’ by [*name of poet spoken, but name indistinct.*]

I love my culture.

It treats people with love and respect.

Kneel down and show that respect.

It treats my husband, my father and mother with love, respect and dignity.

Oh, I love my culture.

My culture allows me to associate with people from all over the world,

Because it is full of love and respect.

It makes me work alongside others,

Because it taught me how to love, respect and honour other people.

It makes work easy for me.

I would be lost without my culture,

Because it taught me how to love,

How to be responsible,

How to take care of others,

How to respect others,

How to trust others.

It’s what life is all about

In order to achieve success in life.

Therefore, I cannot exchange my culture.

Oh, I love my culture.”

33.55: [*Loud applause and cheering.*]

34.04: Plantation Fields / Sugar Dance

Dancer (Sens) laments, chanting sorrowfully: “Medina, medina, medina ... Oh, Africa! ... Medina, medina, medina ... Oh, Mamma Africa!” [*Repeated over and over while there is the sound of coffee beans and then sugar being poured slowly onto the floor.*]

37.00: [*Chanting stops. Movement is conducted in silence.*]

37.28: [*Voiceover, off-stage*]

“Communication is still possible.

Now.

Breathe.

A lack of freedom.
Somebody's mobility is restricted.
Imprisonment.
A lack of freedom.
Somebody's mouth is blocked.
Containment.
A lack of choice.
Somebody's hand is stopped from making that choice.
Corruption.
Now.
Time.
Need.
Breathe.
Come close.
Come very close.
Pay attention and understand.
The blink of an eye.
The wave of a hand.
Something's going to happen.
Something is going to change.
Now.
Breathe."

38.31: *[Applause, hesitant at first but growing stronger.]*

38.40: Hard Work, Lullabye, Liberté

[Sorrowful chanting that begins offstage and continues] "Medina, medina, medina ... Oh Africa!" [Lots of voices together, repeated as the group sweeps the stage. Call-and-response with Sens leading.]

40.35: *[Sens and then the group begin to sing slowly in a call-and-response fashion. The bass drummers clap their drum sticks together rhythmically.]*

41.48: Drummer (Nansady) starts to drum in a very fast and energetic way. Everyone starts clapping and shouting.

42.25: Sens and everyone else on stage begin to sing in a joyful manner. The audience joins in clapping to the beat.

43.25: The drummers ('Drummed Up') start to play the rhythm 'Liberté' – a rhythm created in the 1950's to celebrate Guinea's independence from France.

53.34: Drum leader from 'The Passage' and 'The Caribbean Landing' - "Ladies and gentlemen, put your hands together! *[Audience claps and cheers]* I hope you've all enjoyed yourselves. Let's keep it sweet, people. What we're going to do now is everybody's going to come on stage and we're just going to have a big 'Freedom' jam session, so if you want to clap, scream, shout, or do anything – help yourselves!" *[Loud applause and cheering.]*

1.01.56: *[Loud applause and cheering.]*