



# Conference African and Afro-Caribbean Performance

University of California, Berkeley  
September 26-28, 2008

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Catherine M. Cole, UC Berkeley,  
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*Additional assistance generously provided by:* Grace Leach, Alex Mastrangelli, Charlotte McIvor, Godfrey Plata, Jennifer Reill, Martha Saveedra, Michelle Barron, Ashley Ferro-Murray, Khai Nugyen, Kelly Rafferty, Emine Fissek, and Sinem Yilanci.

## Funding and Co-sponsorship

**UC Berkeley's Dept. of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies** is the lead presenter of this event. With generous co-sponsorship from the following:

*The American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR)* has provided funding to help defray travel costs for scholars coming to the conference from Africa.

*UC Berkeley's Consortium for the Arts* is sponsoring a 9-day campus residency by South African opera singer Pauline Malefane from Isango Portobello Productions. In addition to her participation in the conference and screening, Malefane will be visiting various classes at Berkeley the week after the conference.

•*The University of California Institute for Research in the Arts (UCIRA)* is co-sponsoring Pauline Malefane's visit at Berkeley and also at UC Irvine where she will be hosted by Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Center for Writing and Translation

*The Pacific Film Archive* is sponsoring the public screening of *U-Carmen iKhayelitsha*

Programming support is provided by the UC-wide

*International Performance Multi-campus Research Group (IP-MRG)*

&

*African Studies Multi-Campus Research Group*

### Campus co-sponsorship provided by UC Berkeley's

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Department of English

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### External affiliates include:

*The African Theatre and Performance Working Group of the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR)*

The journal *Theatre Survey*, which is publishing a special issue on African and Afro-Caribbean Performance in 2009

International Center for Writing and Translation, University of California, Irvine



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## Program

<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 26</b>
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12 noon      *Registration, Alumni House*

1 pm          **Opening Remarks**, Toll Room, Alumni House  
Leo Cabranes-Grant, *University of California, Santa Barbara* and  
Catherine M. Cole, *University of California, Berkeley*

**Welcome:** Percy Hintzen, *Director, Center for African Studies,*  
*University of California, Berkeley*

1:40          **Keynote: Gerard Aching, New York University, “At the  
Threshold of Visibility: Liberalism and Populism in Trinidad  
Carnival”**

LOCATION: Toll Room, Alumni House  
CHAIR: Leo Cabranes-Grant

3-3:30      *Coffee*

3:30-5:30

## **Parallel Sessions**

### **A. Global and Intercultural Transactions**

LOCATION: Dwinelle Annex 126

CHAIR: Jocelyn Guilbault, *University of California, Berkeley*

- Bisi Adigun, *Trinity College, Dublin*, “Arambe Productions’ New Version of *The Playboy of the Western World*: Iconoclasm or Interculturalism?”
- Babatunde Allen Bakare, *Center for Ibsen Studies, University of Oslo, Norway; University of Stellenbosch, South Africa*, “Ritual, Mythology and Supernatural Power Display in Africa and Afro-Caribbean Theatre: A case Study of *Death and King’s Horseman* by Soyinka, *The gods are Not to Blame* by Rotimi and *Shangó de Ima* by Pepe Carril”
- Ariel Osterweis Scott, *University of California, Berkeley*, “To Choreograph *Fagaala*: International Representation of Intra-African Genocide”
- Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr., *Loyola Marymount University*, “Soyinka’s Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known: Globalization and Nigerian Theatre in Other Markets I Have Known”

### **B. Theatres of Intervention**

LOCATION: Toll Room, Alumni House

CHAIR: Moradewun Adejunmobi, *University of California, Davis*

- Christopher Connelly, *Grinnell College*, “How Does the Show Go On? Theatre for Development in Post-Election Nairobi”
- David Donkor, *Texas A&M University*, “Theatre Housing in Ghana: Architecture, Performance, and African Post-Coloniality”
- Mbala D. Nkanga, *University of Michigan*, “Mvett Performance: Retention, Reinvention, and Exaggeration in Remembering the Past”
- Praise Zenenga, *University of Arizona*, “Hit and Run Theatre: The Rise of a New Dramatic Form in Zimbabwe”

### **C. Local vs. Global Shifts: Narratives of Culture, Identity and Gender**

**\*\*Panel Sponsored by the African Theatre and Performance Working Group of the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR)**

LOCATION: Bechtel Room, Alumni House

CHAIR: Kene Igweonu, *Swansea Metropolitan University*

- Awo Mana Asiedu, *University of Ghana, Legon, Accra*, “Masculine Women, Feminist Men: Assertions and Contradictions in Mawugbe’s ‘In the Chest of a Woman’”

- Kene Igweonu, *Swansea Metropolitan University, Wales*, “A Ritual for Survival: Identity, Politics and Contemporary African Performance in the UK”
- Ola Johansson, *University of Lancaster and Stockholm University*, “Can Community Based Theater Survive AIDS?”
- Christina McMahon, *University of California, Santa Barbara*, “Choreographic Transmissions of Emigration and Circulation: Dancing the Cape Verdean Woman on the Festival Stage”
- Torsten Sannar, *University of California, Santa Barbara*, “‘I Ain’t Gonna Play Sun City!’: Sanctions and Opportunities at a South African Mega-Resort”

5:30 *Dinner break (see local information in your packets for listing of nearby restaurants).*

8:10

**8:10 PM Screening of film *U-Carmen eKhayelitsha*** followed by Q&A with film star and translator **Pauline Malefane and Kenyan novelist and writer Ngugi wa Thiong’o**, *University of California, Irvine*  
 INTRODUCTIONS AND MODERATION by Catherine M. Cole and James Davies, *University of California, Berkeley*.

LOCATION: Pacific Film Archive—the PFA theatre is located at 2575 Bancroft Way, between College and Telegraph, right near the intersection of Bowdich and Bancroft (across from Urban Outfitters, next to Hearst Gym). Box office opens Friday at 5:30 PM. But tickets can be bought in advance online at: <http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu/tickets/>. Get your tickets early as this event is likely to sell out!

High opera is reinvigorated with the street-level energies of South African townships (and the talents of South African artists) in this jubilant film, winner of the Golden Bear for Best Film at the 2005 Berlin Film Festival. The radiant Pauline Malefane is Carmen, a sensual, all-powerful femme fatale who drags a chain of smitten lovers in her wake, but who is lured into an affair with the one man with the willpower to resist her charms: an officer of the law. If the plot sounds familiar, it should: it’s Georges Bizet’s 1875 opera *Carmen*, even if it is sung in Xhosa and takes place in modern-day Cape Town. Originally adapted for the stage by director Mark Dornford-May, this joyous synthesis of the nineteenth-century European canon and twenty-first-century African talent features members of the internationally acclaimed lyric theater company Dimpho Di Kopane, with Malefane its radiant star.

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 27

9 *Coffee and Pastries*

9:30—11:30 **Plenary Panel: Diasporic Intersections**

LOCATION: Toll Room, Alumni House

CHAIR: Frank Wilderson, *University of California, Irvine*

- Wonderful Godwin Bere, *Metropolitan State College of Denver*, “‘Deception, Deception, Deception:’ Performance of Resistance in Urban Grooves, Zimbabwe’s Hip Hop Music”
- Sandra L. Richards, *Northwestern University*, “What is African Diaspora Drama?”
- Sabine Sörgel, *Aberystwyth University, Wales*, “Deconstructing Diaspora: Transnationalism and Performative Knowledge in the African/Caribbean Context”

11:30-1:30 *Lunch Break*

11:30 Lunch served on Patio for those who pre-registered for the following special session.

12-1:30 **Special Lunch Session: “Funding the Vision: Graduate Field Research in African and Afro-Caribbean Studies”**

*(pre-registration required in order to receive a lunch)*

LOCATION: Toll Room

INTRODUCTIONS: April Sizemore-Barber, *University of California, Berkeley*

CHAIR: Stephan Miescher, *University of California, Santa Barbara*,  
*Co-Director of the UC-wide Multi-Campus Research Group in African Studies*

- **Andrew Apter**, *University of California, Los Angeles*, *Director of the Center for African Studies*
- **Percy Hintzen**, *University of California, Berkeley*, *Director of the Center for African Studies*, and *Professor, African American Studies*
- **Osita Okagbue**, *Goldsmiths College, London*, *Director of new MA in Contemporary African Theatre & Performance*

1:45-  
3:45

## **Parallel Sessions**

### ***E. Sponsoring the Community***

LOCATION: Dwinelle Annex, Room 126

CHAIR: Brandi Wilkins Catanese, *University of California, Berkeley*

- Jenna Burrell, *University of California, Berkeley*, “Persuading a Foreign Audience: Internet Scamming Strategies in Ghana and the West African Region”
- Rosamond S. King, *Brooklyn College*, “When the Public is the Art: Performance, Power, and African Carnival”
- Segun Oyeleke Oyewo, *Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria*, “The Traditional in the Contemporary: Cultural Festivals and Cultural Revival in Nigeria”
- Allen F. Roberts, *University of California, Los Angeles*, “Performing the City: Transformative Arts of Urban Senegal”

### ***F. Bodies in Motion***

LOCATION: Bechtel Room, Alumni House

CHAIR: Scott Wallin, *University of California, Berkeley\**

- Valerie Kim-Thuy Larsen, *University of California, Davis*, “Congo-Memories: Encounters on and off the Dance Floor”
- Pabalelo Mmila, *University of Minnesota*, “Centering Women’s Roles in Martha Lempadi’s ‘Ngwanaka O Tla Nkgopola’ (1992)”
- Shannon Rose Riley, *San José State University*, “Crossing the Windward Passage: Afro-Haitian-Cuban Performance Forms in el Oriente”
- April Sizemore-Barber, *University of California, Berkeley*, “Tangoing in Front of a Firing Squad: the Pas-de-Deux Satire of Pieter-Dirk Uys and Evita Bezuidenhout”

### ***G. Diasporic Consumptions of Blackness: A Roundtable Discussion***

LOCATION: Toll Room, Alumni House

CHAIR: Sandra Richards, *Northwestern University*

- Nicole Castor, *Texas A&M University*, “Spirits Travel: Celebrating Blackness Online and Across the Diaspora”
- Chanzo Greenidge, *UWI St. Augustine*, “Consuming Capoeira- The Cultural Politics of Resistance Movement”
- Meida Teresa McNeal, *Brown University*, “Dialoguing Blackness: Digital Scholarship, Transnational Collaboration, and Vernacular Performance”
- Patricia Moonsammy, *University of Michigan*, “Midnight Robbers, Chantwells and Griots: Diaspora, Lineage, and Trinidadian Rapso Performativity”

**\*\* Plus West African dance workshop!!! (see next page)**

**H. Dance Workshop: Alseny Soumah, Les Ballets Africains;  
Les Merveilles d' Afrique**

LOCATION: Bancroft Dance Studio

CHAIRS/HOSTS: Jasmine Johnson and Ariel Osterwies Scott,  
*University of California, Berkeley*

This class begins with a series of warm ups and strengthening exercises designed to prepare the body for West African dance. The warm up will lead into a high-spirited, rhythmic dance experience that combines body and spirit into an energetic union of music and dance of the people of Guinea. Accompanied by live drummers, this electrifying class loosens up the body and exposes you to a part of West African culture. *All levels of dance welcome. Dance Attire:* Loose comfortable clothes ie: sweat pants, leggings, t-shirt, tank top. No shoes required

3:45 *Break*

4 **Keynote: Tejumola Olaniyan, *University of Wisconsin, Madison*,  
“Contingencies of Performance”**

LOCATION: Toll Room, Alumni House

CHAIR: Catherine M. Cole

5:20 **Closing Remarks:**

**Sue Schweik**, *Associate Dean, Arts and Humanities, UC Berkeley*

**Catherine M. Cole**, *UC Berkeley* & **Leo Cabranes-Grant**, *UCSB*

5:30 **Reception!** Patio, Alumni House

7 *Dinner Break*

9:30 ***SPECIAL EVENT: READING BY NGUGI WA THIONG’O (SEE  
FACING PAGE FOR FULL DETAILS)***

9:30

**9:30 PM, Saturday 9/27**  
**Featured Reading & Dessert Reception**  
**Keynote Speaker**

**Ngugi wa Thiong'o**  
with music by  
**Mamadou and Vanessa Sidibe**

LOCATION: **Bancroft Hotel, 2680 Bancroft Way, reception begins at 9:30,**

HOST: Leo Cabranes-Grant, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

Ngugi wa Thiong'o is currently Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Director of the International Center for Writing and Translation at the University of California, Irvine. A many-sided intellectual, novelist, essayist, playwright, journalist, editor, academic and social activist, Ngugi is the author of plays such as *The Black Hermit* and *Ngaahika Ndeenda* ("I Will Marry When I Want, written with Ngugi wa Mirii), as well as novels such as *Weep Not Child*, *The River Between*, *A Grain of Wheat*, *Petals of Blood*, and *Devil on the Cross*, among others. He will be reading tonight from his most recent novel, published in 2006, titled *Wizard of the Crow*.

"*Wizard of the Crow* is first and foremost a great, spellbinding tale, probably the crowning glory of Ngugi's life's work. He has done for East Africa what Ahmadou Kourouma's *Waiting for the Wild Beasts to Vote* did for West Africa: He has turned the power of storytelling into a weapon against totalitarianism."—  
*Washington Post*

MUSIC: Master kamale ngoni player, Mamadou Sidibe is from the Wassoulou Region of Mali, West Africa. Twenty-five years ago Mamadou played a groundbreaking role in transforming the music of this region from its origins in hunters' sacred melodies--played on six string donso ngoni (hunter's harps)--to a music of philosophical observations, politics, and daily life. Mamadou was one of the first to expand the instrument's range with two extra strings, creating the popular kamale ngoni. For more on Mamadou and Vandessa Sidibe, see [www.musicmali.com](http://www.musicmali.com).

8:30-11:30 *Coffee and pastries*, Alumni House

**9-1 pm** **Group meetings** for the following organizations:

- **International Performance UC Multi-campus Research Group.** LOCATION: Dwinelle Annex 126, Business meeting open to members only
- **African Studies UC Multi-Campus Research Group,** LOCATION: Toll Room, Alumni House, open to Advisory Board members only

**10-12**

- **African Theater and Performance Working Group, IFTR,** LOCATION: Bechtel Room, Alumni House, **open to members and non-members.**

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## PROFILES OF UC BERKELEY GRADUATE STUDENTS WHO MADE THIS CONFERENCE HAPPEN:

**Jasmine Johnson**, University of California, Berkeley, BA, African American Studies; currently a doctoral student in the African Diaspora Studies doctoral program at UC Berkeley. Johnson's research focuses on West African dance classes taught in the United States, which she sees as potent sites where issues of racial performance, African diasporic belonging, and transnational imaginings of Africa are both performed and negotiated.

**Ariel Osterweis Scott**, Columbia University, BA. with Departmental Honors in Anthropology, Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude. Currently a Performance Studies doctoral student at Berkeley. Professional dancer and choreographer. Research interests include race, gender, virtuosity, and temporality in contemporary dance. Additional topics of inquiry include contemporary African choreography and training, transnational collaboration, disability studies, theories of corporeality, and experimental ethnography. Designated Emphasis in Women, Gender, and Sexuality.

**April Sizemore-Barber**, B.A. English, Oberlin College. Currently a Performance Studies doctoral student at Berkeley. Comes with a range of experiences as a performer, director, producer, and critic in the field of theater and social change, with a focus on queer performance. Her primary research interest, however, is in South African theater, museums and visual art as they relate to changing national identities, traumas, and conceptions of justice.

**Scott Wallin**, B.A., Dramatic Arts and Cultural Anthropology, UC Santa Barbara; M.S.W. Social Welfare, UC Berkeley; M.A. Performance Studies, New York University. Currently a doctoral student in Performance Studies at Berkeley. Research interests: Performance of identity with regard to class, race, ethnicity, and mental illness; disability studies; theories and practice of directing and acting for the stage.

## ABSTRACTS

### **Aching, Gerard** (Keynote Friday)

**Title:** “At the Threshold of Visibility: Liberalism and Populism in Trinidad Carnival”

**Abstract:** What notions of freedom prevail in deliberately calling attention to oneself as a scandalizing subject at carnival time? Official views of carnival have historically constructed this reveler as illustrative of the popular classes and their antagonism toward bourgeois practices, city ordinances, and the laws of the nation-state. Recent approaches to carnival have observed that the lines between what constitutes popular, bourgeois, and national have blurred in such a way that social antagonisms have themselves become duplicitous and masked. In this talk, I examine a scene from Trinidad carnival and argue that a pressing challenge to particular freedom-seeking revelers emerges, not simply in the opposition between personal freedom and its social limits, but also in the street confrontation between the Enlightenment’s narrative of emancipation and a morally “conservative” populism. Email: Gerard.aching@nyu.edu

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### **Adigun, Bisi** (Session A)

**Title:** “Arambe Productions’ new version of *The Playboy of the Western World*: iconoclasm or interculturalism?”

**Abstract:** “Interculturalism at its best is a reinforcement of international understanding and friendship, a celebration of common bonds of creativity....” (Claire Conceison *The Joy Luck Club TDR* 39, 3, 1995: 164. In this paper, I argue that in a rapidly changing Ireland, the consistent portrayal of Africans and other black people as outsiders, slaves, prostitutes, victims of racism, psychotic and dregs of modern Irish society in contemporary Irish drama on stage, screen and television, rather than challenge stereotypes, is actually perpetuating them. It is to re-imagine and re-present Africans from an African’s perspective that, in 2003, Arambe Productions, Ireland’s first African theatre was founded.

Arambe’s most recent initiative was the commissioning of the writing of a modern adaptation of J M Synge’s classic *The Playboy of the Western World*, which The Abbey, Ireland’s national theatre, produced to an unprecedented critical and commercial response, during the 2007 Ulster Dublin Theatre Festival. In my presentation, I want to argue that this new version of *The Playboy* with an African Christy Mahon as its protagonist is not an iconoclastic new version as it has been branded but an epitome of interculturalism in theatre practice. Email: adiguno@tcd.ie

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### **Asiedu, Awo Mana** (Session C)

**Title:** “Masculine Women Feminist Men: Assertions and Contradictions in Mawugbe’s ‘In the Chest of a woman’”

**Abstract:** In August 2007 there was a special production of Efo Kodjo Mawugbe’s play, *In The Chest of a Woman* at the Ghana National Theatre in Accra. This production was, according to the playwright and director, in honour of the newly appointed first female Chief Justice in Ghana, Mrs. Georgina Wood. The play was, therefore to be a celebration of the achievements of women and their right to all that they may aspire to. As the lead female character declares; ‘In the chest of a woman is not only an extension of the breast and a feeble heart, but a strong desire to hold and use power.’ However, the play presents incidents and moments in which this laudable intention appears to be completely reversed and women are seen in their stereotypical scheming and subservient roles. This paper examines the production of this play in detail to discover how it may be seen as a celebration of women. Email: <awo\_asiedu@hotmail.com>

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**Bakare, Babatunde Allen** (Session A)

**Title:** “Ritual, Mythology and Supernatural Power Display in Africa and Afro-Caribbean Theatre: A case Study of *Death and King’s Horse Man* by Soyinka, *The Gods Are Not To Blame* by Rotimi and *Shango de Ima* by Pepe Carrill”

**Abstract:** The thematic-preoccupation of ritual, mythology and supernatural power in African and Afro-Caribbean Theatre/Drama as regards to the influence they have on man and his immediate environment, constitute the totality of the three plays I intend to use in this paper, which are *Death and King’s Horse Man* by Wole Soyinka, *The gods Are Not To Blame* by Ola Rotimi and *Shango de Ima* by Pepe Carrill. Could it then be said that it was a deliberate attempt by these three playwrights to display their cultural and traditional background? Or can it be assumed that it is only an attempt at passing across some important information about the African culture and tradition which some scholars claim can not be separated from theatre? All these will serve as important points of discussion in the paper. These three plays, *Death and King’s Horse Man*, *The gods Are Not To Blame* and *Shango de Ima* explains the philosophical foundation that affirms classical African's contribution to myth, legend, and folklore of the Yoruba people’s world of civilization and as it can be seen that historical consciousness and epic memory dominate the plot of the playwright’s works. Email: [tundebakare1@yahoo.com](mailto:tundebakare1@yahoo.com)

The aim of this paper is to examine and analyze how ritual, mythology and supernatural power constitute the three Africa plays to be used in this essay, while its objective is to document my findings for future use by interested scholars who will like to research into the same area. My research will be based primarily on textual analysis of the three plays, *Death and King’s Horse Man* by Soyinka; *The gods Are Not To Blame* by Rotimi and *Shango de Ima* by Pepe Carrill. Relevant and related literatures such as journals, books and articles will be consulted. Email: [tundebakare1@yahoo.com](mailto:tundebakare1@yahoo.com)

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**Bere, Wonderful Godwin** (Plenary Panel, Saturday 9:30)

**Title:** “Deception, Deception, Deception: the Resistance of Urban Grooves (Zimbabwe’s Hip Hop Music) to be Co-opted by the State in Zimbabwean Politics”

**Abstract:** Urban Grooves artist Uncle Jawunda released a song titled "Deception." The song narrates the story of a man who nearly ate a bull frog thinking that it was chicken, leading to the rapper to strongly proclaim: "all that glitters is not gold/The devil may look like a savior but he is not...Deception, deception, deception." In this paper I consider the mobilization of urban grooves music by the State as a political tool and how the music resists co-option. Faced with domestic and international condemnation of its land acquisition program and its mishandling of the ensuing political, economic and humanitarian crises, the State mobilized hip hop arguably to control cultural influences from the West. The government legislated against the playing of non-Zimbabwean music on radio and television and then channeled resources to sponsoring youth artists doing local versions of American hip hop and r&b, and Jamaican dancehall under the pretense to develop the music industry. Who is deceiving who? Is the State deceiving artists by fronting support for the music industry yet breeding a brigade of praise singers to drum up support for its political agenda? Are the artists deceiving the State by accepting its patronage while at the same time subverting its hegemony? In the paper I conclude that while it seems like there is an inherent contradiction in the music, supporting the State and subverting it at the same time, urban grooves is a deceptive genre which resists State co-option at the site it accepts State patronage.

Email: [Wb27@nyu.edu](mailto:Wb27@nyu.edu)

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**Burrell, Jenna** (Session E)

**Title:** “Persuading a Foreign Audience: Internet Scamming Strategies in Ghana and the West African Region”

**Abstract:** Internet scamming strategies associated with West Africa typically involve the creation and deployment of fictional narratives depicting political turmoil, corruption, violence, poverty, and personal tragedy set in a variety of African nations. This article examines Internet scammers complicity in promoting these creatively dramatic and yet stereotyped representations of Africa and Africans. Their approach is an example of what De Certeau describes as a 'tactic' where scammers manipulate the space of representations produced by hegemonic forces in the West to realize subversive ends. The attempts of Internet scammers highlight the difficulties of creating self-representations that are both 'authentic' and persuasive underlining the complexity inherent in efforts by marginalized communities to be heard by those they perceive as powerful. This remains the case despite new mechanisms of communication, such as the Internet, that make connecting (in a purely functional sense) much easier and less expensive.

Email: [jenna@ischool.berkeley.edu](mailto:jenna@ischool.berkeley.edu)

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**Castor, Nicole** (Session G)

**Title:** “Spirits Travel: Celebrating Blackness Online and Across the Diaspora”

**Abstract:** Orisha cultural and political manifestations throughout the African Diaspora have been critical to identities of “blackness” and “Africaness.” Even as the Caribbean has always been “modern” so to the Orisha have been global and transnational in their constitution well before discourses on globalization and critiques on nationalism emerged as popular paradigms of thought. How in this moment of increased global circulations of cultures and commodities do networks of Orisha practitioners use online and multimedia technologies to speak to identities of “Africaness” and “blackness”? How can an exploration of Orisha networks inform the building of Consuming Blackness Diasporically (a multi-sited, multimedia ethnographic performance space facilitated by the Internet)? I will consider these questions through an examination of new festival networks linking Orisha priests and practitioners in Trinidad and Venezuela.

Email: [ncastor@gmail.com](mailto:ncastor@gmail.com)

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**Connelly, Christopher** (Session B)

**Title:** “How Does the Show Go On? Theatre for Development in Post-Election Nairobi”

**Abstract:** Practitioners of Theatre for Development face difficult challenges. Since their performances are developed with, for, and about communities, civic disruptions within these communities can create extreme obstacles to performance. The violence in Kenya following the presidential election has caused ethnic mayhem in areas where a medley of ethnic groups once lived together peacefully, including in the Nairobi slums of Kibera and Mathare. These areas have seen some of the worst violence and are where several Theatre for Development groups focus their performances. The violence took the lives of more than a thousand Kenyans and raised the memory of the genocide in Rwanda and fears among Kenyans of a prolonged civil war. The ramifications of these events will not only effect multi-ethnic communities but also the inner-workings of these multi-ethnic theatre companies themselves. The presentation examines how Kenyan theatre groups pursue their goals in light of this unrest. Email: [cconnellc@gmail.com](mailto:cconnellc@gmail.com)

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**Donkor, David** (Session B)

**Paper Title:** "Theater Housing in Ghana: Architecture, Performance, and African Post-Coloniality"

**Abstract:** I examine the relationship between postcolonial performance and theatre housing/houses in Ghana. Architecture entails a careful demarcation/enclosure of areas and a calculated erection of edifices. Thus, it constitutes a theatrically forceful enactment—a performance—laden with ideology or a particularly determination of human relationships to/in space and structure. When a building houses theatre, itself defined by certain understandings/ articulations of spatial configuration vis-à-vis human relationships, another ideological plane of performativity emerges. Looking at the Ghana Experimental Drama Studio, which stood from 1960 in Accra city but was demolished and rebuilt in the 1990s, I address how post independence theatre architecture in Ghana, by giving tangible form to abstract values of nation and national identity, worked to create and codify national culture. The paper expands scholarship on African theatre/performance by engaging Ghanaian ideas about postcoloniality and disclosing their relationship to (and concerns with) the performativity of theatre architecture.  
Email: donkod@yahoo.com

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**Greenidge, Chanzo** (Session G)

**Title:** "Consuming Capoeira- The Cultural Politics of Resistance Movement"

**Abstract:** Capoeira, one of the many forms of martial arts developed in the Americas by African migrants, has experienced a diaspora of its own. The increasing popularity and constant reinterpretation of the artform, which now has practitioners in over 150 countries worldwide, have multiplied the faultlines that characterise Capoeira's uneasy relationship with its roots in global capitalism. The presentation traces the development of the Capoeira artform through its association with maroon resistance in Brazil, its relationship with Brazilian and global politics, and its path to unsteady acceptance as a part of Brazilian national culture, referencing Brazilian and Caribbean scholarly research and Capoeira's own oral history archives. Based on reflections from his own experiences of capoeiragem in Europe, North America, the Caribbean and Brazil, Greenidge seeks to unpack the cultural politics involved in the practice of Capoeira throughout the African Atlantic Diaspora.  
Email: chanzo.osei@gmail.com

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**Igweonu, Kene** (Session C)

**Title:** "A Ritual for Survival: Identity, Politics and Contemporary African Performance in the UK"

**Abstract:** "If allowed, people will let us get to know them by performing (part of) their culture. Such knowledge – let us call it performative – demands participation (at least as an audience) and therefore some degree of mutual recognition."—Johannes Fabian. This paper considers the influence of ritual in contemporary performance practices, especially how ritual is recreated in those performances that draw extensively on African mythology. Focusing on *A Ritual for Survival* (1989), Peter Badejo's first dance production in the UK, it illustrates what has become an underlying practice in contemporary African theatre and performance. The paper will focus on the creative exploitation of metaphors that undermine the African identity in Badejo's work. It will consider how Badejo's projection of an acquiescent black personality is antithetical to his overall desire to project identity. *A Ritual for Survival* features the transference of an African, indeed Yoruba ritual unto a Western setting, howbeit to a context similar to the one in which it occurs in its original locale. In the paper, I will articulate the problem of adjoining imageries that are evocative of an illusory Western (in this case British) cultural hegemony in an African performance. The paper concludes by suggesting that not sacrificing the African identity in the bid to survive within 'mainstream' Western culture positions contemporary African performance arts in place,

to borrow Isidore Diala's expression, "recontest" and offset the "subtle hegemonic assault...of Western assumption of cultural superiority." Email: [kene.igweonu@smu.ac.uk](mailto:kene.igweonu@smu.ac.uk)

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**Johansson, Ola** (Session C)

**Title:** "Can Community Based Theatre Survive AIDS?"

**Abstract:** The paper presents conclusive findings from a research project that explores the efficacy of community based theatre (CBT) as HIV prevention in Tanzania. By means of analyses of performances, focus group discussions, and interviews, case studies from particular locations are put in relief against more general findings suggesting critical new challenges for theatre against AIDS. Counter to conventional discourse on a theatre serving as medical information, moral education, rapid social change, or communal cohesion, the paper advocates a CBT that performs as action research and a progressive agency for political and civil rights purposes. Without appropriate political or organizational backing CBT is not acknowledged as a legitimate mediation in Tanzanian communities and as long as it is not acknowledged as such it will merely be a reflection of an epidemic condition where women continue to be insecure second-class citizens and men go on as agents of a doomed culture-historical potency.

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**King, Rosamond S.** (Session E)

**Title:** "When the Public *is* the Art: Performance, Power, and African Carnival"

**Abstract:** Carnival is arguably Guinea-Bissau's most popular and consuming moment of expressive culture, and it is also a time when people can express both individual and collective agency. Guinea-Bissau has at best been an unstable, and at worst a violent military state in which even "public" space is the private property of the government. But during the annual carnival, thousands of people take over the streets in the capital. This presentation will analyze the dynamics of power in Guinea-Bissau's 2007 carnival performances, with particular attention to official and impromptu masquerade, and to individual carnival characters, within the country's political and economic context. It will also compare this carnival to other traditions. While the carnival in Bissau has a similar history to other world carnivals it is extremely different from the well-known festivals in Brazil and Trinidad and also departs from many West African masquerade traditions. Email: [rskhappens@gmail.com](mailto:rskhappens@gmail.com)

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**Larsen, Valerie Kim-Thuy** (Session F)

**Title:** Congo-Memories: Encounters on and off the Dance Floor"

**Abstract:** Africa is re-presented, re-invented and re-imagined through the dance performance practices of African immigrants in the United States through collaboration, negotiation and conflict with the expectations, desires and material circumstances of multicultural American publics with an affinity for so-called ethnic dance. While the dance world refers to many of its teachers as "artists," their status as "immigrants" is often met with a disavowal that produces invisibility and leaves people vulnerable to exploitation. Indeed, the stories immigrants tell about dance and its role in charting their trajectories from Africa to the US rarely make it to the dance floor or to the stage. With this paper I will examine two such "immigrant stories," and question the role of dance in both emigration and immigration.

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**McMahon, Christina S. (Session C)**

**Title:** "Choreographic Transmissions of Emigration and Circulation: Dancing the Cape Verdean Woman on the Festival Stage"

**Abstract:** International festival stages are places where globally circulating theatre comes to "rest." While some scholars assert that a festival's inherent "placelessness" transforms culturally specific theatre into vapid national representation, I argue that the kinesthetic activity within a festival performance can innovate new and substantive discourses of national identity based on migration and movement. To advance this argument, I analyze choreographic interventions within the theatre-dance piece *Duas Sem Três* (Two Without Three), performed by the Cape Verdean dance troupe Raiz di Polon for the Mindelact International Theatre Festival on the Cape Verde Islands, West Africa, in 2004.

In *Duas Sem Três*, two female dancers portray Muses who transcend the loss of emigrating lovers by coalescing together through joint labor. After carrying firewood to the slow pace of Cape Verdean *morna* music, they render vacuuming as a sultry blues number. They then reel breathlessly from the rapid hip gyrations of Cape Verdean *batuko* dancing to a frenetic Brazilian samba. Engaging Cape Verde's long history of emigration, the piece simultaneously disrupts female gender roles anchored to notions of stasis and staying at home, as the Muses' choreography enacts circulation within the archipelago itself and abroad to another Lusophone space, Brazil. Since Raiz di Polon toured the piece worldwide, the festival circuit functioned to disseminate globally the dancers' transformative depictions of Cape Verdean women. Drawing on my sustained fieldwork in dance classes with Raiz di Polon, I will also discuss the challenges of using an embodied ethnographic method to analyze mobility within theatrical events.

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**McNeal, Meida Teresa (Session F)**

**Title:** "Dialoguing Blackness: Digital Scholarship, Transnational Collaboration, and Vernacular Performance"

**Abstract:** Similar to the other global sites involved in the Consuming Blackness Diasporically project (i.e. Trinidad and Brazil), Chicago house actively reworks epic memories of slavery, discrimination, resistance, and survival through aural and bodily codes. Chicago house music emerged in the 1980's drawing upon a pastiche sonic lexicon from plantation percussion/drum, chain gangs/work songs, gospel and blues to R&B, soul, funk, and disco. Contemporaneously, house shares a sound/feel with hip-hop, dancehall, salsa, merengue, soca, Afro-beat, etc. Thus, house has the potential to tell a multilayered story about the US African American experience, carving concentric circles outward – local, regional, national, hemispheric, and global. Placing house within the context of the Consuming Blackness Diasporically project, McNeal will discuss the "wiki" format as a tool for transnational performance ethnography that potentially enables: 1) the creation of a more transparent and open-ended exchange that fosters interaction/community dialogue; 2) the construction of a flexible holding (archiving) space that is less dependent on the parameters of time/space (i.e. as opposed to issues for making live studio work wherein renting space, scheduling logistics, and deadlines to finish creative work are often imposed); and 3) experimentation with digital modes of scholarship by allowing multiple formats of documentation/analysis to live together including the following components: Text/writing (critical thought, poetic, choreographic process notes); Aural (mixes, interviews, excerpts from rehearsal process); and Visual (moving images and still clips from rehearsal/performance, original cultural contexts, places/landmarks associated with house). Email: [yemablu@gmail.com](mailto:yemablu@gmail.com)

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**Mmila, Pabalelo** (Session F)

**Title:** “Centering Women’s Roles in Martha Lempadi’s *Ngwanaka O Tla Nkgopola* (1992)”

**Abstract:** This paper acknowledges and celebrates Lempadi’s contribution in the history and development of Setswana literary drama. It examines how Lempadi – as the first female Motswana playwright – mobilizes a bid to place women at the centre of Setswana literary drama tradition. It further assesses how she pursues a feminist agenda within the Setswana socio-political and cultural context. Lempadi’s play reflects the changed family relationships between wife and husband. The paper investigates how in her reflection, she challenges the common stereotypical descriptions of women’s roles (in these relationships) by her male predecessors and counterparts. What is her commitment and vision as a woman and third world person? How does she transmit this vision and intervention to her fellow Batswana? Email: pabalelommila@yahoo.com

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**Moonsammy, Patricia** (Session G)

**Title:** “Midnight Robbers, Chantwells and Griots: Diaspora, Lineage and Trinidadian Rapso Performativity”

**Abstract:** Rapso is a performance genre from Trinidad that is heavily oriented toward locally grounded poetic lyrics that advocate for social justice, national pride, and upliftment of the socio-economically and racially oppressed. This art form has a significant intellectual and political history spanning from Trinidad’s 1970s Black Power Revolution to the present time. It is deeply connected, however, to traditions of resistance that date back to the era of slavery. By strategically tracing the roots of their performance back to traditional Carnival masquerade characters and performers, and further back to the practice of the African griot, rapso artists reject prevailing assumptions that their performances are offshoots of American rap. This study of the negotiations and ideological tensions inherent in tracing a performance lineage in today’s modern world of migrating sounds, multiply located identities, and cultural, political and economic struggles explores how the process of diaspora has generated particular subjectivities and performativities in this community of Trinidadian rapso artists.

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**Nkanga, Mbala** (Session B)

**Title:** “*Mvett* Performance: Retention, Reinvention, and Exaggeration in Remembering the Past”

**Abstract:** This paper examines one of the most important performances in Central Africa, the *Mvett*. It is performed among the *Fang* (also called *Pahouin*) people found of Gabon, Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea. This performance is both a *lieu de mémoire* and a *milieu de mémoire*, to use Pierre Nora’s ideas, for a people who believe in a glorious warring past made of mythical and fantastic heroes who fought for physical mortality and immortality. The omnipresence of the *Mvett* during various social events and rituals allows Fang to dream of that past and hope of replicating its feats today. The performer galvanizes his audiences around a mythical ideology and pride that shape Fang identity, community, and contemporary history. Thus, I explore questions pertaining to the nature and process of the *Mvett* performance, its artistic and mnemonic functions in Fang settings.

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**Olaniyan, Tejumola** (Keynote, Saturday afternoon)

**Title:** "Contingences of Performance"

**Abstract:** We always attach a goal to theatrical or cultural performance, whether clearly articulated, implicitly assumed, thought of only incoherently or not at all. In many instances, the goal is more clearly stated than not. In any case, a goal more often than not organizes the character, form and content of our performance. It is not enough that we know what we want to do and how to do it; we must also envisage an outcome, effect, etc. "What are we performing for?" has remained an old and undying question but our answers, often bold and lofty, have hardly moved beyond hopeful speculation. In spite of all our heroic programmatic labors, performance confronts us as the untamable art of the contingent. If this is so, do we still need to think of goals in performance and how do we do so? How do we conceptually and practically think the contingencies of performance? I will be using selected texts and performances from Africa and its diaspora in the Caribbean and the United States for examination as examples and thought-templates.

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**Oyewo, Segun Oyeleke** (Session E)

**Title:** "The Traditional in the Contemporary: Cultural Festivals and Cultural Revival in Nigeria"

**Abstract:** An appreciation of the aesthetic in Nigeria needs to take account of the renaissance in both traditional and contemporary festivals in recent times primarily because festivals offer insight into a vast diversity of experiences and significantly impact on the aesthetics and moral values. This paper focuses on the study of organization and aesthetics of these festivals in Nigeria by providing insight into the trend of the cultural revival, its effects on the theatre and implication for the ecosystems of the arts in Nigeria. The communal nature of the Nigerian traditional festival performances provides a moving theatre experience which to a great extent has influenced the emerging dimensions of the contemporary cultural festivals. Employing a combination of cultural analysis and criticism of some traditional and contemporary cultural festivals, the paper situates them within the nature of cultural festivals and carnivals around the world. Email: [segoyewo@oauife.edu.ng](mailto:segoyewo@oauife.edu.ng)

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**Richards, Sandra** (Plenary Panel, Saturday morning)

**Title:** What is African Diaspora Drama?

**Abstract:** I propose that there are at least four categories of plays that fall under this rubric: a diaspora version of the DuBoisian formula of by us, for us, about us in which characters live in one diasporic site and wrestle with their relationships to their adopted and so-called ancestral homes; a Herskovitsian conceptualization in which African value systems have been partially carried over from the continent and adapted to meet New World realities in one national location; an idea or text that circulates transnationally amongst various diaspora sites; texts that perform diaspora by enacting the labor involved in effecting relationships amongst disparate sites. After discussing these categories, this paper will center on the idea of the diaspora's return as dramatized in Lynn Nottage's *Mud, River, Stone*.

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**Riley, Shannon Rose** (Session F)

**Title:** “Crossing the Windward Passage: Afro-Haitian-Cuban Performance Forms in *el Oriente*”

**Abstract:** There have been three massive waves of Haitian immigration across the Windward Passage—the 50-mile-wide strait that runs between Cuba and Haiti—into eastern Cuba (*el Oriente*). This paper will use contemporary theories of transnationalism to understand the various Haitian migrations into Cuba in terms of their political and social contexts, which included the impacts of colonialism as well as US political and economic imperialism—forging a complex transnational contact zone. It will also examine the Afro-Haitian-Cuban cultural performance forms that have emerged as a result of these crossings, using Fernando Ortiz’s theory of transculturation. Special attention will be paid to the *tumba francesa*; *rara*, particularly as performed by the *grupo folclórico*, *Mystère du Voudu d’Haïti*; the Afro-Haitian folklore ensemble Guilermon Moncada; the *ballet folclórico*, *Cutumba*; Grupo Vocal Desandann (Kreyol for “descendants”); and Grupo Okay, which takes its name from an area in southern Haiti.

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**Roberts, Allen F.** (Session E)

**Title:** “Performing the City: Transformative Arts of Urban Senegal”

**Abstract:** Probably every urban space the world over is and always has been subject to *refabulation*—that is, endowing places with new myths and historical allusions deemed more suitable to shifting social and cultural needs than what has come before. Graffiti is used for such purposes following both global and local idioms, for example. In this regard, what distinguishes contemporary Dakar, Senegal, from many cities in Africa and elsewhere is the degree to which visual and related performance arts are transforming urban places through devotion. The great majority of Senegalese are Muslims, and most participate in one of four major Sufi movements; of these, the Mourides have created the most vital public arts, by far.

Many street artists are contributing to the refabulation of Dakar, yet few with the subtlety and mystical impact of a man named Pape Diop. Since 2004, he has been adorning the walls of inner-city Dakar with graffiti depicting Cheikh Amadou Bamba (1853–1927), the Senegalese holy man whose writings and life lessons are central to the Mouride Way. What differentiates Diop’s works from those of other street artists is the layering of his portraits: he paints image upon image. In so doing he produces astonishing effects, among them a three-dimensionality known as auto-stereopsis that seems to reach out to viewers, or to receive them into mesmerizing intricacies. Bamba’s portrait is an active, iconic presence that conveys God’s blessings (*baraka*). Through the mystical energies of *baraka*, Diop’s graffiti changes the meanest streets into great talismans, making them protective and promotional to all who dwell in or pass through them. Furthermore, the images’ pronounced repetition recalls and promotes *zikh* (*dhikr*), chanted “recollections” of God, which provide the pulse of Mouride life. Through these means, even the most anomic neighborhoods of the city can be *transformed as performed*.

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**Sannar, Torsten** (Session C)

**Title:** “I Ain’t Gonna Play Sun City!’: Sanctions and Opportunities at a South African Mega-Resort”

**Abstract:** In 1985, Bruce Springsteen back-up man, Steven Van Zandt, wrote and produced one of the most effective anti-apartheid songs of the decade. “Sun City” combined the talents of fifty-four artists in an effort to make the eponymous South African mega-resort a nonviable booking option for international performers. While Van Zandt’s single never achieved vast commercial success, the cultural impact of his project in South Africa and the United States was significant. “Sun City” became a vital component of the larger cultural boycott of South Africa and its creation helped to forge the identity of South Africa as a pariah in the eyes of the international community. Van Zandt’s song not only catalyzed a rise in American popular consciousness concerning the apartheid regime; it simultaneously contributed to a demand for Sun City entertainers upon which local South African performers of multiple ethnicities quickly capitalized. Email: tsannar@gmail.com

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**Scott, Ariel Osterweis** (Session A)

**Title:** “To Choreograph *Fagaala*: International Representation of Intra-African Genocide”

**Abstract:** This paper explores Senegalese dance company Jant-Bi’s evening-length work, \*Fagaala\* Choreographed collaboratively by Jant-Bi director Germaine Acogny and Japanese choreographer Kota Yamazaki, *Fagaala*, which means “genocide” in Wolof, is an abstract staging of Boubacar Boris Diop’s 2000 novel, \*Murambi, le livre des ossements\* (the book of bones), the first fictional rendering of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. This paper reconciles *Fagaala*’s dissemination through the \*inter\*national stage with its representation of \*intra\*-African genocide. What kinds of distancing take place when genocide is first fictionalized, then choreographed, then witnessed as poetic spectacle? Conversely, what is distilled when genocide is figured into such a series of non-literalizing gestures?

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**Sizemore-Barber, April** (Session F)

**Title:** “Tangoing in Front of a Firing Squad: the Pas-de-Deux Satire of Pieter-Dirk Uys and Evita Bezuidenhout”

**Abstract:** South African satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys has performed the character Evita Bezuidenhout for 25 years. Their tempestuous relationship—between creator and creation—evokes questions about theatre’s role in facilitating change and expressing complexities of identity: why is a gay white man—as Afrikaans woman—popular in a primarily black, often homophobic country? How has Uys’ combination of satire, parody, and camp allowed audiences to laugh at fear? How is Evita a parodic mirror, undermining official South African history while leaving room for change and evolution? Tracing their respective histories, I unravel the interplay between politics, identity, and performing body as intermediary.

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**Sörgel, Sabine** (Plenary Panel, Saturday morning)

**Title:** “Deconstructing Diaspora: Transnationalism and Performative Knowledge in the African/Caribbean Context”

**Abstract:** Facing transnational politics at the beginning of the new millennium, contemporary dance choreographers Faustin Linyekula (RD Congo), Ismael Ivo (Brazil/Germany) and Bill T. Jones (USA) share an attempt to dissect post/modern dance vocabulary in their culturally hybridized, multi-media stage presentations of international conflict, hunger and local civil wars. Not only do these choreographers present engaged art between media and body politics, but they also query into the meaning of dance, cultural identity, militarism, death and survival in the twenty-first century. Juxtaposing Ismael Ivo’s *Delirium of a Childhood* (1989), Bill T. Jones’ recent *Blind Date* (2005) and Linyekula’s *The Dialogue Series: iii. Dinozord* (2006), the presentation interrogates modes of corporeal mediatization, performative knowledge, transnationalism and the possibility for a new cosmopolitan politics in contemporary dance. Email: [bas@aber.ac.uk](mailto:bas@aber.ac.uk)

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**Wetmore, Kevin J., Jr.** (Session A)

**Title:** “Soyinka’s *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known*: Globalization and Nigerian Theatre in Other Markets I Have Known”

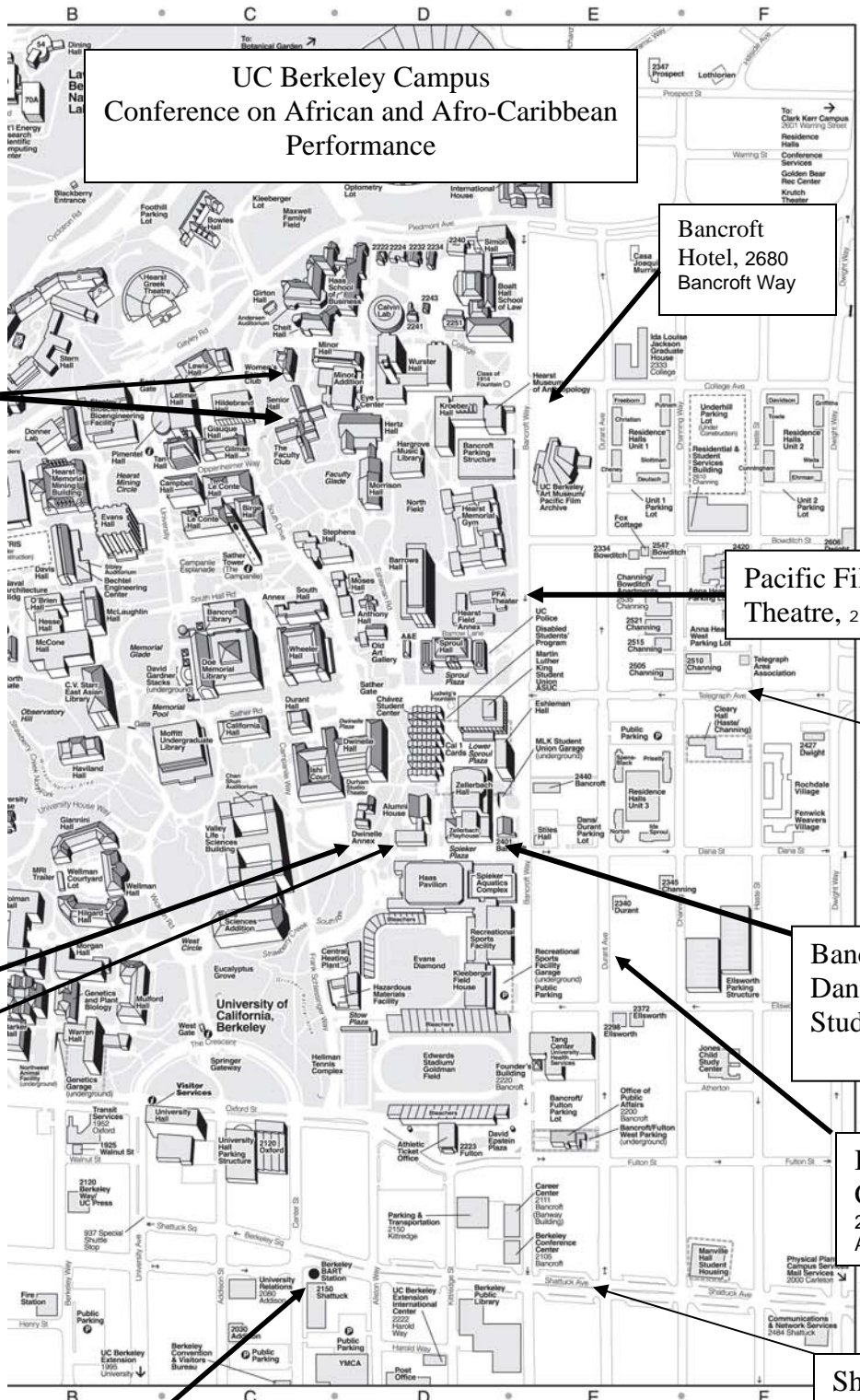
**Abstract:** In 2005, Wole Soyinka adapted and directed his poem *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known* for public performance at the Arts Theatre in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The piece was subsequently directed by the author at the Haus der Kunst in Berlin in 2007 and in Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University in 2008. Soyinka states the performance piece is rooted in the Yoruba proverb, “The world is a marketplace,” and the piece itself remains rooted in Yoruban ritual and Nigerian culture. But it has never been performed in Nigeria. *Samarkand* is a performance text rooted in Nigerian culture that is not (as of this writing) destined to be performed in Nigeria. Using reviews, interviews with participants and with Soyinka himself this essay examines the internationalization of Nigerian theatre in general and Soyinka’s play in particular as it raises key issues of representation, the relationship between text and performance, and the globalization of African culture. Email: [kwetmore@lmu.edu](mailto:kwetmore@lmu.edu)

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**Zenenga, Praise** (Session B)

**Title:** “Hit and Run Theatre: The Rise of a New Dramatic Form in Zimbabwe”

**Abstract:** This paper examines a new theatrical phenomenon on the rise in post-independence Zimbabwe. I contend that Zimbabwean artists are constantly developing new and relevant system of aesthetics for theatrical performances in response to increasing state surveillance, harassment arrest, persecution and censorship. My discussion specifically focuses on a new aesthetic form appropriately known as Hit and Run theatre. The aesthetic responses which this highly inventive dramatic form evokes are worth analyzing. My analysis starts from the premise that Hit and Run theatre is a historical necessity born out of a repressive political and socio-economic environment in which dissent is muzzled and views opposed to the state are not tolerated. Although Hit and Run theatre utilizes some techniques which resemble earlier forms of Theatre for Development (TfD) already practiced in Zimbabwe and other African countries, I argue that it bears its own unique form, techniques, strategies, content and objectives. Email: [zen08@email.arizona.edu](mailto:zen08@email.arizona.edu)



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