The Pan-African Theatre Ensemble

Presents

An Echo in The Bone

by

Dennis Scott

Directed by D. Amy-Rose Forbes-Erickson, PhD
African Community Theatre, Oscar Ritchie Hall, Room 230,
Department of Pan-African Studies, Kent State University
Thursday, November 15 at 7pm
Produced by special arrangement.
The Pan-African Theatre Ensemble
P.A.T.E. Membership

The Pan-African Theatre Ensemble is actively recruiting volunteer actors in the 2018/2019 season. The P.A.T.E. consists of volunteers from Northeast Ohio, and Kent State university faculty, students, and staff. The Pan-African Theatre Ensemble produces African-based plays with a deep and abiding commitment to African performance in the global Black world. Contact Dr. Forbes-Erickson for an audition ASAP at (330) 672-0082 or email at dforbese@kent.edu
Welcome to the African Community Theatre
On behalf of the faculty, staff, and students of the Department of Pan-African Studies, we would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone attending today’s performance in our African Community Theatre. It is my hope that this experience will enhance your understanding of Pan-African theatre, cultures, and the importance of theatre in our lives as a community and in society.

The Pan-African Theatre Ensemble
The Pan-African Ensemble (P.A.T.E.) is a university theatre group for research on Pan-African theatre since fall 2016. We incorporate new media and technologies with elements of performance art, installations, video, digital works in theatre for cultural activism and liberation practices among African, African-descent, Indigenous, and Middle Eastern cultures and peoples.
We are actively recruiting new members throughout the academic year. Please contact Dr. Forbes-Erickson at dforbese@kent.edu or (330) 672-0082.

For tonight’s performance, please pay attention to the following:

- No photographs
- No filming
- No recording of the play-audio or visual
- No food or drink in the theatre
- Turn off all cell phones for the duration of the show.
- Welcome to parents with toddlers and infants. If your little ones become a little fussy, please take them to the auditorium so that actors will not be distracted.

Thank you for your cooperation, and do enjoy the show.
Follow the Pan-African Theatre Ensemble on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/thepateksu/
Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/groups/actpate/
Twitter - https://twitter.com/thepate_ksu
Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/thepate.ksu/

Fringe Theatre Festival - Summer 2019
The Pan-African Theatre Ensemble has been invited to perform at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland in the summer 2019 with the International Collegiate Theatre Festival. Please support our community members to travel to perform at Fringe festival with $5, $10, or $20 + on our Go Fund Me page below. Thanks!

Go Fund Me Page
https://www.gofundme.com/manage/pate-going-to-the-fringe
Synopsis

An Echo in the Bone by Dennis Scott


An Echo in the Bone is about a poor farming family in rural Jamaica in 1937– with a father, “Crew,” mother, “Rachel,” and two sons “Jacko” and “Sonson,” and Jacko’s wife “Bridget” - all descendants of enslaved Africans who continue to live and work on a sugar plantation in abject poverty after slavery ended in 1834. The play takes place during a nine night ceremony, a traditional African Jamaican ritual to usher departed loved ones to the spiritual realm.

Included are ritual elements from Kumina, an African Jamaican religion with its distinctive dance, music, trance, and spirit possession practiced by Bakongo (Kongo) descendants whose ancestors arrived in Jamaica pre-Emancipation as enslaved people, and later during post-Emancipation in the 1840s as indentured laborers from the Angola/Congo region. The Bakongo people brought Kumina religion to Jamaica as communions with the Gods and Ancestors for help, guidance, and blessing in life and death events – engagements, marriage, births, deaths, entombing, good outcomes in court cases, help in sickness, good health, well-being, blessings and prosperity.

In the play, the plantation owner Mas’ Charlie is dead. Everyone suspects that Crew killed Mas’ Charlie, ran away, and disappeared for now nine days. His wife, Rachel believes that her husband Crew is dead, and decides to have a nine night ritual in his honor. In the play, the nine night ceremony
explores what happened to Crew and to all the African ancestors through spirit possession and trance. Crew and the ancestors return to speak through the living from a 1792 capture on a slave ship off the coast of West Africa to to moments in 1820, 1834 at the dawn of Emancipation to Crew’s existence on a 1937 sugar plantation.

*An Echo in the Bone* examines the burden of the greater crime: the crime of Crew killing the white plantation owner, or the crime of slavery against enslaved peoples that led to Crew killing Mas’ Charlie in defense of his family’s survival.

**Playwright: Dennis Scott**

Dennis Scott (1939-1991) was an acclaimed Caribbean playwright, poet, director, dancer, and actor born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1939. Scott was the Head of Directing at the Yale University School of Drama (1986-1991), and Director of the Jamaica School of Drama in Kingston, Jamaica (1977-1983). He was one of the original dancers in the National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica, founded by Professor Rex Nettleford in 1962. Scott taught theatre widely in the Caribbean, England, and the United States; and his plays were regularly produced at the Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center,
Connecticut, U.S.A. Scott’s many honors included the Shubert Playwrighting Fellowship (1970), the International Poetry Forum Award (1973), and several gold and silver medals for playwrighting and directing.

**Director/Production Design:**
**Dr. D. Amy-Rose Forbes-Erickson**

D. Amy-Rose Forbes-Erickson is the founder and artistic director of the Pan-African Theatre Ensemble at Kent State University. Dr. Forbes-Erickson (“Dr. Amy-Rose”) has twenty-seven years of professional experience in theatre production, including directing, lighting, sound, projection, props, costume and set design. *An Echo in the Bone* is Dr. Forbes-Erickson’s sixth production with the Pan-African Theatre Ensemble. Recent directing credits include *The Purple Flower* by Marita Bonner, *Vejigantes* by Francisco Arriví, *Venus* by Suzan-Lori Parks, *Tahinta!* by Efua Sutherland, and *The Bacchae of Euripides* by Wole Soyinka. Dr. Forbes-Erickson is the Director of the African Community Theatre, and an Assistant Professor of Pan-African Studies. Her research includes areas in theatre history, literature, text, criticism, theory, performance studies, directing and devising with digital media. Her expertise is in Pan-African and Global...
Black theatres including African, African Caribbean, African American, and Africanity in Latin American theatres with representations of race, Black women, spaces of liberation, and African performance elements as culture in action. Dr. Forbes-Erickson earned her doctorate in Theatre: Performance as Public Practice from the University of Texas at Austin.

**Graduate Assistant in Pan-African Studies (Theatre):**

**Production Assistant/Lighting - Emmett Drugan**

Emmett Drugan is currently a Graduate Assistant in Pan-African Theatre. He has significant experience working in all realms of the theatre, but most notably he enjoys lighting, set design, and painting. He earned a Master’s degree in Art Education from Kent State and is currently working on his second Master’s degree- this time for Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Much of his experience has focused on making a difference in the lives of youth through teaching art, drama, Japanese, and martial arts and is looking forward to changing his path and continuing his work through counseling. One of Emmett’s passions is social justice and working to empower people to make positive change within society. Currently, his research and volunteer work focus on the lives of transgender youth and creating safe spaces for them to be themselves. The African Community Theatre is providing him an exciting and creative experience; and sees these productions as a form of
social justice. He sees various layers of meanings in this play and is eager to see what the audience takes away from this performance.

**Directorial Concept:**
My directorial concept involves an experimental merging of traditional African performance elements with digital media (film, image and audio) to produce liberation epistemologies of an African world view from the deeply spiritual realm of the Ancestors. *An Echo in the Bone* explores ritual and trance in the representations of Kumina, an African religion, in Crew’s nine night ceremony to assist him to the spiritual world on the ninth day after death. Through trance and spirit possession, the characters unravel ancestral memory in time and space to an unexpected dramatic end.

D. A-R. Forbes-Erickson, PhD

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jamaica,_administrative_divisions_(parishes)_-_en_-_monochrome.svg
Maps of the continent of Africa showing the Congo/Angola region where the Bakongo (Kongo) people are from. The map
of Jamaica shows the parish of St. Thomas, southeast of the island with the most concentrated area of Bakongo descendants who live in Bongo or Kumina Nations in family communities.

**The Bakongo**

![Bakongo Cosmogram](http://oreinodokongo.blogspot.com/p/cultura.html)

For Kumina devotees, the Bakongo cosmogram explores the belief system of living and spiritual worlds of the unborn, living, and the dead. Red represents the living world; yellow is for the spiritual world. White represents death, and black is for birth.
In Kumina religion, there are sky- and earth-bound deities. The Supreme Creator is Oto King Zombi. Ancestral spirits are called zombi from the Kikongo word dzambi. During Kumina, Zombi return to possess devotees to preside over ceremonies, perform duties, and to sustain the community. Devotees who were ever possessed by zombie in Kumina will return as zombi in Kumina ceremonies. Devotees who were never possessed in Kumina would ascend to the Supreme Creator Oto King Zombi upon death.

Kumina communities are organized in vibrant family groups called “nations,” and take the title of “Bongo” with Kings and Queens as spiritual leaders of Kumina or Bongo nations in Jamaica.

Kumina songs sung in Kikongo language are called “country” songs, referring to “homeland” in Africa. “Country” songs are reserved for the most sacred of ceremonies to appease Ancestors for good graces, thanksgiving, weddings, nine nights, entombing, and all matters in life and death. Kumina songs sung in Jamaican Creole (i.e. Kikongo words and phrases + English words) are called bailo songs, reserved for secular festivities.

All Kumina songs used in this production are both country and bailo songs from ceremonies in St. Thomas in Jamaica in 2015 and 2016. 
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkCKDPGbSGI
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSi-BTOcarA
Source: http://digjamaica.com/kumina

Production Team
Director/Production Designer: D. A-R. Forbes-Erickson
Production Assistant & Lighting: Emmett Drugan
Set Decoration, Props & Sound:
Leanda Wonders-Bloomquist.
Leanda Wonders-Bloomquist is a first-year Political Science student at Kent State University from Warren, Ohio with hopes of becoming an attorney. This is her first time working with the Pan-African Theater Ensemble, and she hopes to diversify her resumé and make lasting connections.

Set Decoration, Props, & Costumes: Varshani Raghuje
Sri Varshani Raghuje is a freshman and Fashion Design major. She is an international student from India assisting with the props, costumes, and the set. She loves theater, hopes to gain experience and exposure in technical theatre. Finally,
she would like to thank Dr. Forbes-Erickson for this wonderful opportunity and believing in her.

**Cast**
Rasheedah Wahid as RACHEL  
J. L. Mooreshine as SONSON/CREW  
Latoya Gooden as BRIGIT  
Daylon Hill as RATTLER  
Tawandga Howell as MADAM  
Lynda Mbala Mwakisha as MISS P  
Alicia Cleveland as LALLY  
Madison Ledyard-King as JACKO/DREAMBOAT/STONE

**Acts and Scenes**

**Act One**
1. 1937 – Old Sugar Barn behind Crew’s Cottage  
2. 1792. The slave coast on board a ship  
3. Madam’s shop in the village 2 days ago.  
4. Auctioneer’s office in town, 1820  
5. 1833. Woods near an estate. Hounds are baying in the distance.

**Act Two**
1. Later that night, 1937  
2. Late morning. Four years ago.  
3. 1834. Black. In the dark, half a mile away. Drums  
4. Last Monday, 1937 on Crew’s farm
Section of cast, Bakongo woman (1910), and Bakongo art
http://www.genuineafrica.com/bakongo_art.htm
A Kumina ritual in Portland, Jamaica

http://www.largeup.com/2016/10/21/pic-of-the-week-kumina-jamaica/
Cast Bios

Rasheeda Wahid as Rachel

Born May 4th 1968 and raised in Akron Ohio, Rasheeda Wahid has appeared in a televised production called ‘Classroom Camera’ in 1978 for taking second place in an “I love Akron” contest. Rasheeda and her sisters inherited a family gift of singing as a group became popular in their family as well as their community. Rasheeda first staged production was welcomed at the Urban League Community Center in Akron Ohio performing “To Be
Young Gifted and Black” by Lorraine Hansberry. During high school, she performed in various community talent shows including a role in “Perfect Young Ladies” as well as Vince Fontaine’s “Grease,” to name a few. Rasheedah Wahid studied at Wooster Business College, and Liberty University and now lives in Kent, Ohio.

J. L. Mooreshine as Sonson/Crew
J. L. Mooreshine is from Alliance, Ohio and has twenty years of experience in manufacturing and maintenance. A newcomer to the acting world, Mooreshine is a life-long lover of arts and entertainment and his intense work ethic and passion for perfection drives him. He believes that Pan-African Theatre Ensemble is a wonderful outlet where a person with a dedication and a love for art and self-awareness
can grow, network, and continue educating oneself in a positive and safe environment.

**Latoya Gooden as Brigit**

Originally from Chicago, Illinois, Latoya Gooden has lived in Ohio since 1996. Since 2006, Latoya has been operating two small businesses over the last 12 years, a non-profit Community Outreach organization and Hiddend Pearls, LLC, as a home health agency. Latoya graduated from Robert T. White Practical Nursing Program in 2016, and pursued a Small Business Management Major and Human Resource Minor Associates degree at Stark State College. With over ten years of working and volunteering for several Social Service
Agencies throughout the Stark County area, Latoya is looking forward to completing her Social Service coursework to become a licensed Social Worker. She is a very outgoing, open-minded person who loves meeting new people and learning new things such as acting in her current role as Bridget. Latoya is extremely happy, excited, and thankful for the opportunity to be a part of The Pan African Theatre Ensemble.

**Special Guest - Daylon Hill as Rattler**

Daylon Hill is from Canton, Ohio with theatre experiences performing in school plays and showcases. He is our special guest as Rattler, and enjoys performing on stage.
Tawandga Howell is an artist and theatrical performer. Howell has performed in such plays as *Exonerated*, *Hell Cab*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum*, and *To Kill a Mocking Bird* just to name a few. Tawandga is originally from Maywood, Illinois where she was born and raised. She aspires to become a stage and television actress which has been her lifelong dream. She enjoys painting, meditation, exercise, and hair styling. Tawandga is also a caregiver for those with physical disabilities.
Lynda Mbala Mwakisha as Miss P

Lynda Mbala Mwakisha from Nairobi, Kenya. She is a Kent State University alumna, and is currently working in communications in the Kent State University Career Exploration and Development office. She is an old soul, a traveler, a dancer and a c/kulture enthusiast. Once upon a time, she dabbled in theater production. Lynda dreams of seeing *Lion King* the musical, dancing *la salsa* on the streets.
of Havana and witnessing Africa live up to its full, FULL potential i.e. *Wakanda*. Brought to you by radical faith and relentless gratitude in Jesus’s relentless love and ridiculous grace.

Alicia Cleveland as Lally

Alicia Cleveland is a freshman at Kent State University and is majoring in Theatre Studies with a concentration in Performance. She has been in several productions including: *Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, and *Shrek the Musical*. She has also assisted with costumes on productions including: *Into the*
Woods, Odd Couple, You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown, and many others. Alicia aspires to become an actress but would also enjoy a career in fashion or costume design.

Madison Ledyard-King as Jacko/Dreamboat/Stone
This is Madison Ledyard-King’s first endeavor as an actor, previously working as a crew member on several high school productions. Currently a freshman at Kent State University, Madison is a Managerial Marketing major, but has always had a passion for the arts and wants to use acting as his first stride into the world of entertainment. Originally from Cleveland,
Madison’s ability to meticulously study and learn a character to flawlessly embody them motivates him in this play. Madison is looking forward to this and future performances with the Pan-African Theatre Ensemble. He would like to thank his parents for supporting and encouraging him to try new things.

Kumina Drums (Jamaica)
http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20140803/arts/arts2.html
The Bakongo sign of cosmos and the continuity of human life. 

Special thanks and appreciation for each community volunteer, Kent State student, staff, and faculty members; and to you our great audience.

Dedicated to Lar and Izzy.

Blessings and Prosperity.