Sancho: An Act of Remembrance

Conceived, written, and performed by Paterson Joseph

Co-directed by Simon Godwin

DATES: DEC 16—19 at 7:30pm
DEC 20 at 3pm

LOCATION: BAM Fisher (Fishman Space)

RUN TIME: 1hr 10min (no intermission)

BAM GATHERING: Sancho
With Paterson Joseph
Led by Bryan Doerries
Thu, Dec 17, Post-show
BAM Fishman Space
Free for same-day ticket holders

Season Sponsor:
Bloomberg Philanthropies

Major support for theater at BAM provided by
The Francena T. Harrison Foundation Trust
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#Sancho
#BAMNextWave
Sancho: An Act of Remembrance

A co-production of Pemberley Productions in association with the Oxford Playhouse

Writer and Performer
PATERSO JOSEPH

Co-Director
SIMON GODWIN

Set Design
MICHAEL VALE

Music Arrangement & Sound Design
BEN PARK

Lighting Design
LUCRECIA BRICEÑO

Costume Design
LINDA HAYSMA

Assistant Lighting Designer
ANSHUMAN BHATIA

Oxford Playhouse Production Manager
TIM BOYD

Production Associate
PAMELA SALLING

Assistant Director
ANNA GIRVAN

Design Assistant
SARAH JUNE MILLS

Producer
TIM SMITH

The majority of the music heard this evening was composed by Charles Ignatius Sancho.

Recorded Ensemble
BUFFY NORTH, Violin
PHIL BROWN, Viola
REBECCA JORDAN, Cello
BEN PARK, Bass and Harpsichord

Sancho: An Act of Remembrance was originally commissioned by the Oxford Playhouse in 2011. This production of Sancho: An Act of Remembrance had its first performance at the Oxford Playhouse on Thursday, September 17, 2015.

This production of Sancho: An Act of Remembrance is supported by the Arts Council of England under its Grants for the Arts Scheme. The producers wish to acknowledge the help and support of the October Gallery, London.

The actors are appearing with the permission of Actors’ Equity Association. The American stage manager is a member of Actors’ Equity Association.

American Stage Manager
R. MICHAEL BLANCO
ABOUT

Sancho: An Act of Remembrance

Author’s Note

I had never heard of the subject of my play until I discovered Thomas Gainsborough’s portrait of the extraordinary Charles Ignatius Sancho in a book by historian Gretchen Gerzina, Black England. The most remarkable thing about this discovery is not that most people hadn’t a clue about such an amazing pioneer of multi-ethnic Britain, but that I, a Black Briton, had no clue either. Truth is, I had presumed that the presence of black people in Britain began in 1948 with the 249 passengers (and one stowaway), on board the ship HMT Empire Windrush, when it docked at Tilbury from Montego Bay, Jamaica. Any previous dealings blacks had with the UK would have been remote, I had imagined—African slavery, Caribbean plantations, etc. But was that right?

In the early 2000’s, I began a lengthy research period—hours, days, months, years—trawling the archives for details about Black Britain. Most books I tackled were pretty dry. Heavy on facts, light on story. But with Gerzina’s book, I discovered the joy of research. Her stories took me much further back than I could have imagined. My knowledge of Black Britain was transformed by my threefold discoveries about the man baptized in 1729 by the Bishop of Cartagena, Colombia: Charles Ignatius.

First, Sancho’s life was no Roots, nor was it a British version of 12 Years a Slave. Charles Ignatius’ journey was odder, more quirkyly eccentric, and subtler than the American models of slave life I’d been used to seeing and reading about. Second, Sancho was a “victim” of the British gentry’s love of “exotica.” He was black, smart, humorous; he appealed to those who knew that Africans were not merely the “beasts of burden” as the slave traders portrayed them. Third, he was an entertainer in a time of supreme entertainers; his best friends were the satirical, shaggy-dog tale author, Laurence Sterne and the greatest actor of the 18th century, David Garrick.

My final, pleasant shock of enlightenment was reading about the “black frolics” and dances organized by the countless black servants, freemen, and sailors all over London’s parks. A community of souls who all knew the dangers for Africans in the world beyond the UK, they trod a careful path within these Isles to maintain both their freedom, and that of their oftentimes white spouses and mixed-heritage children. They may have been seen, but they were seldom heard. Still, for them, being ignored meant being relatively safe from attack. Like their white, working-class friends and neighbours, they were shut out of political life because you had to be a property owner to register to vote. And very rare, maybe non-existent, was that working class citizen who could afford to buy property.

It may be hard for some of us today to imagine a world where one is treated as a second class citizen, with little or no say in the running of one’s own country. In England before the early 20th century this was true for all women and the majority of men. Getting one’s vote registered would become a burning goal for the working men and women of the UK for much of the 18th and 19th centuries and beyond.

And Sancho would have been amongst that disenfranchised and dissatisfied throng. All this is a sobering reminder, if ever one was needed, to never abstain from voting!

Through these years of research my ideas of British life and Black British contributions to it have been revolutionized. What I thought I knew about multi-ethnic Britain before the arrival in 1948 of 492 West Indian Blacks on the SS Windrush and the subsequent controversy over assimilation and what I now know has, for me, changed forever the meaning of the words, Black British. I now write them confidently, but with awareness of their resonance on every form that begs the question: Who do you think you are?

My humble hope is that this play will contribute a little to an understanding of our shared British history. Whoever we are.

Paterson Joseph

September 2, 2015
Who's Who

PATERNSON JOSEPH
Author and Performer

Paterson Joseph has worked regularly at the National Theatre in London (Whale, Saint Joan, Royal Hunt for the Sun, The Emperor Jones, Elmina's Kitchen) and the RSC (Julius Caesar [BAM 2013], Don Juan, Troilus and Cressida, Love's Labours Lost, King Lear, The Pretenders), as well as the Royal Exchange, Gate, Almeida, and Young Vic theaters. Television includes BBC's The Hollow Crown (PBS), The Leftovers (HBO), and Danny Boyle's Babylon. Joseph is a season regular on Law and Order UK and Peep Show, and he has also appeared in Doctor Who, Hustle, and No.1 Ladies Detective Agency (all BBC). In 2015 Joseph served as a season regular on a new series on C headphones. His credits include the Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre, Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Opera North, English Touring Opera, De Vlaamse Opera (Antwerp), Los Angeles Opera, New Zealand International Arts Festival, Galaxy Theatre (Tokyo), Warsaw Globe Theatre Company, Munich Biennale, Lyric Hammersmith, Royal Court, Almeida Theatre, Soho Theatre, Manchester Royal Exchange, Birmingham Rep, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Sheffield Crucible, Northampton Theatre Royal, Liverpool Playhouse, Nottingham Playhouse, Bristol Old Vic, Plymouth Theatre Royal, Edinburgh Royal Lyceum, Bolton Octagon, Oldham Coliseum, Manchester Library Theatre, Salisbury Playhouse, Colchester Mercury Theatre, English Touring Theatre, Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Sage, Gateshead, Battersea Arts Centre, Spymonkey, Kneehigh Theatre Company, and Told By An Idiot, with whom he is an Associate Idiot.

Between 2009 and 2011 Godwin was associate director of Bristol Old Vic, where he directed The Little Mermaid, Krapp's Last Tape, A Kind of Alaska, Faith Healer, and Far Away.

MICHAEL VALE
Set Design

Michael Vale has designed the sets and costumes for more than 200 theater and opera productions both in the UK and abroad including those he has directed. Companies he has worked with include the Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre, Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Opera North, English Touring Opera, De Vlaamse Opera (Antwerp), Los Angeles Opera, New Zealand International Arts Festival, Galaxy Theatre (Tokyo), Warsaw Globe Theatre Company, Munich Biennale, Lyric Hammersmith, Royal Court, Almeida Theatre, Soho Theatre, Manchester Royal Exchange, Birmingham Rep, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Sheffield Crucible, Northampton Theatre Royal, Liverpool Playhouse, Nottingham Playhouse, Bristol Old Vic, Plymouth Theatre Royal, Edinburgh Royal Lyceum, Bolton Octagon, Oldham Coliseum, Manchester Library Theatre, Salisbury Playhouse, Colchester Mercury Theatre, English Touring Theatre, Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Sage, Gateshead, Battersea Arts Centre, Spymonkey, Kneehigh Theatre Company, and Told By An Idiot, with whom he is an Associate Idiot.

Vale's work has been nominated for two Olivier Awards, an Irish Times theater award, a Manchester Evening News theater award, a Charrington Fringe First Award, and two Off-West End theater awards.

BEN PARK
Music Arrangement & Sound Design

Ben Park has an extensive track record as a producer, collaborator, director, performer, and educator. He originally studied at the Royal College of Music and subsequently, having gained a degree in zoology at University College London, he set about becoming a session musician working with such bands as Soul 2 Soul, The Escape Club, Lamb, and Diesel Park West. He has written and performed for film, television, and theater, notably the multi-award winning 70 Hill Lane with Improbable Theatre; as associate artist at the Royal Opera House with long time collaborator, choreographer/director Fin Walker; the triple BAFTA winning, Oscar-nominated S4C production of The Canterbury Tales, and the new British comedy film, Downhill the movie.

This year, Park is currently collaborating as associate director/composer with Fin Walker on a new Macbeth, to be premiered at the Norwich Festival in 2016.

LUCRECIA BRICEÑO
Lighting Designer

Lucrecia Briceño is a Peruvian artist currently based in Brooklyn. Much of her work has been in association with artists developing innovative and original pieces. Her designs have been presented at such venues as Arena Stage in Washington, DC, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dallas Theater Center, Berkeley Center, La MaMa E.T.C., Culture Project, Pregones Theatre, Intar, HERE Arts Center, Soho Rep, Ohio Theatre, Irondale Center, and ArtsEmerson in Boston. Internationally her work has been seen in Venezuela, Peru, Turkey, Scotland, Korea, Colombia, and Norway.

This year, Briceño's design work for Crime and Punishment was part of the Venezuelan presentation for the Prague Quadrennial. Her design work has been nominated for several awards, recently receiving a Bel Geddes grant on the upcoming production of The Desire of The Astronaut. She has been a guest artist/lecturer at NYU, Princeton University, Hunter College, and the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

LINDA HAYS MAN
Costume Designer

Linda Haysman trained as a theater designer at Central School of Art and Design. She specializes now in costume design and has worked at the BBC covering a whole variety of shows from period dramas and plays to popular sit-coms. Her credits include the feature films Delirium, The Black...
Prince, Sus, Niagara Motel, Urban Ghost Story, and The Runner.

ANSHUMAN BHATIA
Associate Lighting Designer
Anshuman Bhatia’s designs for dance, opera, and theater have been seen at Canada’s Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Soho Rep, Arena Stage in Washington, DC, HERE Arts Center, New York Theater Workshop, Lincoln Center Director’s Lab, Infinity Theater Company, the Juilliard School, University of Denver, New School for Drama, and Columbia University. His assistant and associate designs have been seen at the New York Philharmonic, Central City Opera in Colorado, Washington Ballet, Anchorage Opera, Roundabout Theater, Guggenheim Museum, Opera Theater of Saint Louis, and BAM. He holds an MFA from NYU, and more information can be found at bhatiadesign.com

ANNA GIRVAN
Assistant Director
Anna Girvan trained at Bristol Old Vic and is a Jerwood assistant director 2014—15. As a director, her work in theater includes Welcome, Friend at the Courtyard; A Little Nonsense at Edinburgh Fringe and Brighton Fringe; Stuff at the Bike Shed, Exeter; and Debris and Contractions at the Alma Tavern (also Trafalgar Studios 2). As assistant director, works include Richard II at Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre; The Red Lion at the National Theatre; Happy Days at the Young Vic; The Lion King at Bristol, Manchester, and Birmingham UK tour venues; A Voyage Round My Father and The Lady in the Van at Salisbury Playhouse; The Good Companions at Bristol Old Vic Studio; and Glengarry Glen Ross at the Ustinov, Bath Theatre Royal.

PEMBERLEY PRODUCTIONS
Producer
Founded by Tim Smith, Pemberley Productions is a producing company dedicated to bringing European drama to North America and North American drama to Europe. Its previous projects include a European Tour of the Public Theater’s Apple Family Plays written and directed by Richard Nelson and an Irish Tour of the American Players Theatre’s production of James DeVita’s In Acting Shakespeare. In addition to producing the UK and US tours of Sancho, in the 2015—16 season Pemberley Productions will also produce a nine-week North American tour of the Filter Theatre (in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company) production of Twelfth Night. Prior to founding Pemberley Productions Tim Smith worked as the general manager and consulting producer for Druid Theatre Company in Ireland and as a tour manager for the Royal Shakespeare Company.

OXFORD PLAYHOUSE
Producer
Oxford Playhouse and its Burton Taylor Studio present and produce a wide range of live performance. The program includes the best of British and international drama, family shows, contemporary dance and music, student and amateur shows, comedy, lectures, and poetry. The Playhouse has been presenting and creating all kinds of performance since 1938. It produces and tours its own shows, has the acclaimed Shared Experience as its resident company, mentors emerging artists through the Evolve Artists in Residence program, and presents Playhouse Plays Out, an ongoing series of off-site events which take surprising theater to unexpected places across the county. The Learning Team works with over 14,000 people each year through post-show discussions, workshops, work experience, three resident young people’s theater companies, and holiday workshops. The Playhouse also produces an annual pantomime. Its 2014—15’s Beauty and The Beast was seen by 36,000 people, and 2015—16 will see more OP productions on the main stage including Sancho and an exciting new production of The Tempest in October. Visit oxfordplayhouse.com for more information.

Oxford Playhouse is thrilled to be co-producing this new run of Sancho: An Act of Remembrance.
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