

Voices Across the Oceans

A vocal performance production with female voices from Zambia, Comoros and the UK

The Black-E is delighted to welcome back British-based Black Voices, with Maureen Lilanda from Zambia (also making a return visit) - and Nawal, originally from the Comoros Islands - in a collaborative project directed by Antoinette Lester (in association with the Birmingham Rep).



“Voices Across the Oceans” includes a female griot linking the music of the seven singers and their challenging and diverse music about universal peace. Occasional percussive rhythms will weave its way through the finest a cappella harmonies to celebrate the beauty of the human voice. Members of the company will also lead afternoon vocal workshops.

Evening performance 8pm

*Tickets £8 Adults, £6 Concessions, £15 Families. (2 Adults & 2 Children, £1 for each additional Child)
Available from The Black-E and News From Nowhere Bookshop, Bold Street, Monday to Saturday
Online at www.theblack-e.co.uk*

Afternoon vocal workshops 2-4pm

One workshop is principally for adults, one for young people aged 13 -18. Space is limited so please book in advance through Maria at the Black-E. Some previous singing experience is helpful but not essential; the main requirement is enthusiasm and commitment to take part.

For more information contact The Black-E on 0151 709 5109

or email [staff \[at\] theblack-e.co.uk](mailto:staff@theblack-e.co.uk)

Concessions apply to:

- Over 60s
- Unemployed
- Disabled
- Students

Carol Pemberton, music director of Black Voices, sees this production as a very exciting opportunity for the group, as well as audiences, and adds that

“It’s really exciting as we have never done anything like this before. We are used to getting on a stage anywhere in the world and delivering quality concerts but when you are working with three other performers, from different musical genres and cultural backgrounds, you really have to trust and rely on each other.”

Bob Ramdhanie, Operations Director of CMAT and the Producer for the International Touring Programme believes that

“Regional audiences deserve to see and hear the best music from the continent and the African Diaspora. At CMAT we are working to ensure that there is a musical legacy from these Black Routes productions. We are offering an education programme to accompany tours and most of the visiting artistes will be involved in collaborations with local artistes.”

Artistes Involved are:

Maureen Lilanda – Zambia

Maureen was born in 1967 in Lusaka, Zambia. ‘Mama Zambia’ or fondly known in Zambia as ‘Aunty Maureen’ is a singer, songwriter and performer. Endurance, patience and generosity characterize Maureen best. For the past twenty years, she has travelled extensively both locally and internationally, consistently grabbing the attention of her listeners and fans. Increasing her genre from subdued cabaret/jazz singer to an African vocalist, Maureen blends modern beats and rhythms with authentic sounds and tastes of Zambia. Maureen has released four albums, **Nandayeya**, **Coming Home**, **Evolution** and her latest release **Tetwe** under ZAMMO Sounds Record label.

Nawal

Nawal originally comes from the Comoros Islands, also known as the “Perfume Islands” or “Islands of the Moon,” off the eastern coast of Africa. Between traditional and contemporary, Nawal’s music weaves a rich dialogue of cultures, a reflection of the diverse character of life in her native islands. Indo-Arabian-Persian music meets Bantu polyphonies, the syncopated rhythms and Sufi trance of the Indian Ocean. Nawal sings in Comoran, Arabic, French and English. Known as the “Voice of Comoros,” Nawal is also the first Comoran woman singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist to give performances in public.

As a Muslim-born African woman who does not always adhere to traditional socio-religious codes, Nawal has faced many challenges in her career. Descending from the grand Sufi marabout of Comoros, El-Maarouf (1852-1904), Nawal invariably stays with the light of Islam founded upon love, respect and peace. In her music, she sings in favour of all humans, for education and for union.

Black Voices

Quietly and gently, informally and gradually, Black Voices was nurtured under the directorship of Carol Pemberton and Bob Ramdhanie. Since 1987, these two friends have steered Black Voices into one of the most solid performance and teaching companies, sharing a cappella, primarily from Africa but also throughout the Diaspora.

The company is inspired by the music of Sweet Honey in the Rock, Mahalia Jackson and Take Six, to name but a few, but since inception, has forged its own dynamic way of distilling and re-presenting black music from a Caribbean, black British perspective. Grounded in the black church, the group

began presenting a cappella, both sacred and secular, which was always challenging and entertaining. From gospel to spirituals, Caribbean to African, jazz and blues, Black Voices is firmly rooted in music that energises and uplifts, challenges and educates.

The company hosted and presented its own a cappella series with BBC Radio 2, has performed for radio and television in numerous countries around the world, has produced nine CDs, and has researched, produced, directed and performed in several international collaborations

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