

ACE = African Cultural Exchange

The ACE vision is to promote the understanding of African and Caribbean dance and music, using traditional and contemporary choreographic methods and new technologies.

The main focus of the company's work is in dance, collaborating strongly with music and, in particular, the relationship which new music technology has upon traditional musical genres. ACE also work with other art forms including theatre and multi-media.

Alongside a busy touring schedule, ACE deliver extensive education programmes working with adults and young people in a variety of settings within Birmingham, the West Midlands and across the UK. Through their touring productions and busy outreach work, ACE have become a pioneering force in British contemporary dance.

To learn more about ACE, go to www.acedanceandmusic.com

TOUR SCHEDULE 2004:

February

- 3rd Castlevale ArtSite, Birmingham 0121 747 6226
- 5th Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton **(Gala Performance)**
- 6th Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton 01902 321321
- 10th Music Hall, Shrewsbury 01743 281281
- 11th Sheldon Heath ArtSite, Birmingham 0121 464 4428
- 12th Elite Hall, Crook, County Durham 01388 761126
- 13th Spennymoor Leisure Centre, Spennymoor, County Durham 01388 816166
- 24th Wootton Village Hall, North Lincs 01469 588586
- 25th Civic Arts Centre, Pocklington 01759 304750
- 26th Withernsea High School & Technical College, Withernsea 01964 613133
- 27th The Gate, Goole 01405 763652

March

- 3rd Lady Hawkins High School, Kington, 01544 230441
- 4th Queens Hall, Widnes 0151 424 2339
- 10th Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal 01539 725133
- 11/12th Warwick Arts Centre 0247 652 4524
- 13th Derby Dance Centre 01332 370911
- 16th Solihull Arts Complex 0121 704 6962
- 17th Plowright Theatre, Scunthorpe 01724 277733
- 25th Baxter College, Kidderminster 01562 741524
- 30th Rawlins Community College, Loughborough 01509 231914

April

- 2nd Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells 01892 678678
- 8th Corn Exchange, Newbury 01635 522733
- 17th Howden Park Centre 01506 433634
- 22nd Queen Elizabeth School, Kirkby Lonsdale 015242 71275
- 23rd Appleby Grammar School, Appleby-In-Westmorland 017683 51580



dance and music

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www.acedanceandmusic.com



...ready to mess with your mind?...

en-trance



ACE

dance and music

acknowledgements

Artistic Director: Gail Parmel

Musical Director: Ian Parmel

Performers:

Jenny Dunn

Keisha Grant

Sioda Martin

Marcia Tessa Edwards

Gail Parmel

Josephine Okonji

Choreography:

Act 1+3: Gail Parmel

Act 2: Bawren Tavaziva

Choreographic Consultant: Koffi Koko

Music:

Original Music: Andy Garbi

Sound Design: Junior Willocks

Live Percussion: Ian Parmel

Vocalists: Monique Reid, Denise Gordon

Lighting Design: Natasha Chivers

Set Design: Claire Whitcomb, Andy Martin

Graphic Design: Lionart

Costume Design: Mango Design

Photography: River Studio

Video Projection: Active-Optics, using hand painted film by Sima Gonsai, edited by Scylla Magda.

Stage Manager: Aaron Mapp

Associate Lighting Designer: Heidi Riley

Education and Project Manager: Emma-Jane Benning

Marketing: Helen Stallard

Spring tour booked by Emma-Jane Benning and UK Arts International. UK Arts International: Exclusive booking management

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Thank you

Wanjiku Nyachae

Clive Cole

Amani Naphtali

Decibel

Therese Elliott @ Tamba Internet

Shirley Carr

Natalie Carr

Nicola Carr

Marcus Carr

ACE Youth

www.acedanceandmusic.com



danceFEST



from the artistic director

Looking at Trance from ancient roots to its modern day evolution has been an educational journey that began in Benin, Africa.

Witnessing the honesty, passion, belief and beauty presented by the people of Ouidah, Benin, has given me the experience, knowledge and confidence to create En-Trance, a full-length production that will open your mind and soul to the power of Trance, regardless of colour, creed or race.

En-Trance promises to take you full-circle through time, culture and music.

Enjoy...
Gail Parmel

Setting the scene

En-Trance takes you on a journey into Trance and Possession, from ancient Africa to its modern day incarnation.

Imagine... You walk into an unknown space but know it is sacred, holy and religious. Underneath your feet you feel the unevenness of the ground, and as you walk into the space the sand floods your sandals with each step.

It is dark and in front of you is a large white house with a marquee-type shelter made from palm leaves and bamboo. On the opposite side of the Space there is a smaller, square building, the Shrine. Inside you see a mound of layered white stone, with dark streaks running down the side.

Lit ever so slightly, the space is filled with the quiet voices and distant sounds of the night, but there is an eerie sound of the mind working. From inside the white house a woman, the Priestess, appears, dressed all in white, large in size and moving with an energy and power that resonates through the Space.

The drummers prepare their drums with libation and begin playing.

Are you ready to mess with your mind?

EnTrance (Act 1): African drums, ritualistic vocals and contemporary strings call to mind the powerful energies of the Sacred Space. Statuesque figures stand guard whilst the initiates purify and prepare the space for the entrance of a higher being. Dance is used to get into a state of grace, as ancient spirits are called to occupy the outer limits of the Space.

FleshLess (Act 2): This second movement explores possession, the manifestation of spirit within the human form. The initiates evoke and then welcome the spirits into the Sacred Space. One at a time, two spirits enter. The two spirits compete to possess the initiates and to remain part of the community.

InTrance (Act 3): If 'Trance' was a thing here and now, how would it manifest itself? In the modern age, people are unaware that they are being entranced: by the adrenaline of the rat-race, the game, the club. InTrance completes the cycle from the ancients and shows that trance still has the power to heal.

biographies



Gail Parmel (Artistic Director, Choreographer and Dancer)

A graduate of the Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Gail joined Kokuma Dance Theatre in 1992 under the direction of Jackie Guy, and worked with artists

such as Germain Acogny, Koffi Koko, Patsy Ricketts, Eduardo Riveria and Sheryl Berryman-Miller. She went on to work with Badejo Arts on Living Circle and Agbo Aye. An experienced choreographer, Gail was awarded the Greenhouse Effect Award for young choreographers (1998). In addition to her work for Kokuma (The Awakening; 1993) and Badejo Arts (Agbo Aye; 1996), she has been guest choreographer for many youth and community productions including Fusions (Bristol, 1998) and the nationally acclaimed co-production with Sampad, Dounia (2000). Gail has choreographed five successful touring productions for ACE Dance and Music: The Path, The Colours Within, Solitude or Sanctuary, 3 Shades and En-Trance.

Gail has researched and travelled extensively throughout Europe, the Caribbean and Africa. She participated in the Black Choreographic Initiative, which received support from L'Antionette Stines, David Rosusseve, We Were Liking and Janice Garrett, and has also worked with Batanai, the National Dance Company of Zimbabwe. Gail continues to build on her skills and expertise as a performer and choreographer through strategic research. She is currently embarking on a high profile education project with African Caribbean choreographer and lecturer Beverley Glean, Director of Irie Dance Company.



Ian Parmel (Musical Director and Percussionist)

Born into a family of musicians in Trinidad, Ian began drumming at the age of five, performing for the first time in the Best Village Competition in his homeland.

He has gone on to perform and compose for companies such as Kokuma Dance Theatre, Badejo Arts, Brummalata, Pan Project, WOMAD and the International Workshop Festival.

Ian has also performed as an individual practitioner, visiting the Ivory Coast, South Africa, Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, and has worked extensively in Europe and the Caribbean. He has trained with gurus such as Simon Di'jobi, Jurwon Ogunbe, Arona Ndaiyi and Karl Massado, and has accompanied artists from Peter Badejo and Koffi Koko to George Momboye and Neville Campbell.

Ian has taught at the Bami Jo summer school for three years, also composing and directing the music for Badejo Arts' performances including Living Circle (1994), Sisi Agbe Aye (1995) and Agbo Aye (1996). Commercial credits include BBC Radio productions The Gods Are Not to Blame (1994) and Death and the Kings Horseman (1995).



Jenny Dunn (Dancer)

Living and working in Birmingham all her life, Jenny trained at the Betty Fox and Rita Cashmore Schools of Dance. She then attended the Italia Conti Academy of Performing Arts, studying for three years

and going on to perform in several pantomimes and variety shows. She then worked with the company Dance Alive. During 2003 she has worked with DanceXchange, a national dance agency based in Birmingham, and was also Worcestershire's Dance Artist in Residence, working in association with Malvern Theatres. Jenny has worked with ACE Dance and Music on three productions: Solitude and Sanctuary, 3 Shades and En-Trance.



Keisha Grant (Dancer)

Keisha began training from a tender age at the Maureen Smith School of Dance in Birmingham. She entered many dance competitions and was awarded the Most Promising Dancer award on five

occasions. Keisha went on to train at Laban Centre in London, and is currently undertaking a BA (Hons) degree at Roehampton University, Surrey. She has performed in professional pantomimes and hit musicals, including Mac and Mabel at Birmingham's Alexandra Theatre. She has worked alongside artists such as Phats and Small and Boy George. Keisha has also worked with Union's youth company, Youth Too, and most recently with Liberty Dance Company appearing at Battersea Arts Centre in the production Praising All Dimensions. She looks forward to her debut performance with ACE Dance and Music.

**Sioda Martin** [Dancer]

Sioda started performing at an early age, in dance but mostly in music. Her interest in dance grew from the age of 11, when she joined Barnsley Youth Dance Theatre. She toured with BYDT around the

Yorkshire region, under the direction of Alison Thornton-Clarke. Sioda went on to train straight out of school at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance, graduating in 2002 with a BA (Hons) Degree in Contemporary Dance. During her time at NSCD she worked with choreographers Neville Campbell, Jamie Watton and Darshan Buhller, and in her final year she went on the Verve National Tour with NSCD, performing at the Gross Britannia Festival in Dortmund, Germany. In November 2002 Sioda joined ARC Dance Company as an apprentice, working on Hamlet under the direction of Kim Brandstrup. She joined ACE Dance and Music in July 2003.

**Marcia Tessa Edwards** [Dancer]

Marcia studied Performing Arts at Harrogate College and then went on to train at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. Over the past year, Marcia has extended her technical

abilities through training with RJC Dance Company. She has also worked with the group New Flesh, choreographing, song writing and performing at the Leeds Festival and Leeds Met. In addition to her performance work, Marcia continues to train in salsa, modern jazz and ballet.

**Josephine Okonji** [Dancer]

Josephine is a prolific dancer from Nigeria. Since finishing her education in 1995, Josephine has trained with many different types of dance workshops and had worked with choreographers such as

Abdula (Ahajotas) Fred Bendogue (Azanie Dance Company 2001), Adedayo M Liadi (Ipder Dance Company, 2002), H Patten (The British Council, Nigeria) and Peter Badejo (Badejo Arts, 2003). She is a member of the Guild of Nigeria, who awarded her a Solo Merit Award in 2002. For Josephine, dance is life, and she is using her wide-ranging experience to teach African dance professionally.

Bawren Tavaziva [Choreographer]

Bawren was trained in Zimbabwe by Neville Campbell, former Artistic Director of Phoenix Dance. He toured Africa and Europe with Tumduka Dance Company from 1993 to 1997, and performed with Phoenix Dance and presented his choreographed piece, *Hola Out*, on the Mission 2001 tour. He choreographed and performed with Union Dance in their autumn 2002 programme, *Permanent Revolution V2R*. Bawren's teaching credits include work with Phoenix Dance, Union Dance, Sakoba and The Mission 2001 Roadshow.

Bawren's choreography and style of music are influenced by the spirit of Zimbabwe, the Shona people he was born into and urban contemporary British life.

Koffi Koko [Choreographic Consultant]

A child of the Nago people Koffi was born in the sacred city of Ouidah, Benin, the cradle of Voodoo culture. Having acquired a reputation through his performance and contemporary African dance classes, Koffi has

travelled the world to teach and collaborate with artists from many different backgrounds and horizons. A selection of his many professional achievements include being named Choreographer / Artistic Director at the National Ballet of Benin (1995), co-producing Sisi Agbe with Peter Badejo for *Dance Umbrella* (London and UK tour), performing *Passage* in New Orleans and American tour with the writer Olympe Bhely-Quenum and Dagbo Hounon, the Supreme Voodoo Leader of Benin (1996/7), organising the *Atouts African Festival* in Benin (2002) and, most recently, being named Artistic Director for the radical *In Transit Festival 2004/5*, at Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt, Berlin.

Monique Reid [Vocalist]

Monique Reid is the youngest of six children. Her parents, who were both ministers in their local Pentecostal church, encouraged her and her siblings to perform at church meetings and gospel concerts. Monique's desire to carve out a solo career inspired her to explore the various vocal techniques of other genres. Monique has a versatile singing style which has led her to perform and record with various artists, including Michael Bolton, Steel Pulse, Beverly Knight, Florida Mass Choir and Black Voices. Monique is currently writing and recording her own material whilst continuing her session career.

Denise Gordon [Vocalist]

A diva with an electrifying voice and a stage presence to match, Denise Gordon has performed in over 20 countries, including Brazil and Australia. She has played at Buckingham Palace, Glastonbury and the T in the Park, and has performed in front of an audience of over a quarter of a million people for the Pope.

biographies

European visits include the New Orleans Jazz Festival in Ascona, Switzerland, Jazz By The Sea in Domburg, and Vlissingen, where she appeared with Sammy Rimington.

Denise's repertoire is extensive. Gospel trained, she now covers jazz, reggae, blues, spirituals, folk, African and Caribbean pieces, which can be adapted to entertain a variety of audiences. Her soul remains deeply rooted in Gospel and her church, with which she shares the powerful and beautiful message of hope.

Thanks to god who enables me to do all things, to Carol Pemberton for pushing me on and to Monique Reid (Original Vocalist), a friend who is constantly inspiring and supportive.

Andy Garbi (Original Music)

Andy Garbi is one of the leading torchbearers for cross-gene music. His cutting edge work has gained the support of leading artists in all fields including Kennedy, choreographer David Bintley (Birmingham Royal Ballet) and award-winning playwright Chris O'Connell (Theatre Absolute).

Andy has also worked on several recordings and composition projects, including composition for the play *Raw* by Theatre Absolute (Fringe First Award winners Edinburgh Festival 2001) and *Café Atlantic*, a dance collaboration between Birmingham Royal Ballet and Gallery 37 in Chicago linked via live ISDN broadcast (Life Long Learning award winner 2002).

Andy's work draws on disparate influences from Indian classical through to European folk, film scores and contemporary dance music. Andy is a strong advocate of new technologies and this has become a platform for exploring his Anglo-Himalayan roots, leading to journeys into filmmaking and the digital

domain (Brighton media festival in August 2002).

Andy is currently working on a new solo project entitled *Darklight*, which aims to push male vocal boundaries within the traditional song format. The music will be influenced by his fascination for fairytales, especially from Eastern Europe.

Junior Willocks (Sound Design)

Junior's professional career began as a session musician, recording and touring with reggae artists all over the world – Junior has played in Bahrain, Turkey, the West Indies and most of Europe. He has worked with Buju Banton, John Holt, Alton Ellis and Chaka Demus & Pliers, to name but a few.

Junior began writing his own music in 1994 and he has been invited to write and play on several recordings. He created the music for RJC Dance Company's productions *Captured*, *Vibe* and *Krazy Spirits*, and composed the score for the ACE Dance and Music production, *3 Shades*.

Natasha Chivers (Lighting Designer)

Natasha's work in theatre is extensive and far-reaching. Recent projects include *The Straits* (Paines Plough, Hampstead Theatre, Plymouth Drum), *The Cherry Orchard* (Oxford Stage Company - National Tour), *The Bomb-itty of Errors* (The New Ambassadors, London/Dublin), *Playhouse Creatures* (Quarry Theatre, West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Peepshow* (Frantic Assembly, Plymouth Theatre Royal, Lyric Hammersmith and Tour), *Wit* (Stellar Quines, Tron, Traverse and Tour), *After The Dance* (Oxford Stage Co National Tour), *Present Laughter* (Bath Theatre Royal Productions), *The Drowned World* (Paines Plough Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh/Bush Theatre London), *Tiny Dynamite*

Frantic Assembly/Paines Plough Lyric Hammersmith/Tour), *A Chaste Maid In Cheapside* (Almeida Theatre Co. national tour), *Helmet*, (Traverse Theatre/Paines Plough Tour) and *Jumpin Beans* (Oily Cart, Theatre Clwyd).

Aaron Mapp (Stage Manager)

Aaron has toured extensively both nationally and internationally as a production manger for dance, theatre and music. After over 6 years as Technical Stage Manger at The Cave in Birmingham, Aaron's recent work includes productions with ACE Dance and Music, Black Voices, Bimba Dance Theatre Company and Kushite Theatre Company.

Heidi Riley (Associate Lighting Designer)

Heidi trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, specialising in Production and Technical Stage Management. After leaving college she worked with such companies as Scottish Opera, The Citizen's Theatre and The Tramway Theatre, as well as touring with Grey Coast Theatre Company, Tag Theatre Company, Anatomy Dance Company and 7:84 Theatre Scotland. She also completed two seasons at Pitlochry Festival Theatre and spent time at London's Royal Court Theatre. Heidi is now based in London where she divides her time between various venues and touring companies.

Active Optics create visuals inspired by experimental sound. They also perform live as part of Midlands based audio visual collective Modulate. This is the first time they have been involved in creating visuals for ACE. www.active-optics.co.uk

education

'It is great being part of ACE Youth because it's more than a performing dance group, it's a second family. ACE helps improve your ability to dance with confidence and perform as a team.' Darnisha - ACE Youth member

'I was lucky to have workshops with professional dance companies while at school and it changed my life. So now I want to give young people the same opportunities I had.'

GAIL PARMEL Artistic Director

In addition to their performance work, ACE Dance and Music undertake a wide range of educational and community outreach work.

They have a subsidiary company, ACE Youth. Formed in 1998, ACE Youth are a group of talented young people from in and around the Birmingham area, aged from 9 to 22 years old. Under the artistic eye of Gail and Ian Parmel, the directors of ACE Dance and Music, young people are encouraged to experience dance, work with professional artists and create new performance work. ACE Youth have developed a professional approach to dance and performing arts as a whole.

There is also an exciting range of education work accompanying En-Trance, including dance and music residencies and workshops. Please contact your venue or the ACE office for details of how you can be involved with En-Trance.

ACE Youth have worked with a wide range of regional and international teachers and choreographers, whose expertise have fallen in the category of African, Caribbean, Asian, hip hop, contemporary, caporeia and jazz dance and music, as well as in theatre and poetry.

ACE Youth perform across the Midlands, including mac and the Drum, and are very proud to have performed at every Birmingham Artsfest, the UK's largest annual free arts festival.

If you would like more information on ACE Youth get in touch with the ACE office or visit www.acedanceandmusic.com

