

**PORTFOLIO OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**  
**SECTION I**

**THE AESTHETIC MATERIALS OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH**

# **!HalleluiaH!**

## **Excursions into a Third Space**

**Carnival Messiah as an instrument of  
Postcolonial Liberation**

**Geraldine Connor**

### **PORTFOLIO OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

#### **SECTION I:**

#### **THE AESTHETIC MATERIALS OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH**

Submitted in fulfilment for the degree of Ph.D. in  
Cultural Studies  
Department of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies  
University of Leeds

September 2005

# **!HALLELULIAH!**

EXCURSIONS INTO A THIRD SPACE

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### **SECTION I**

#### **THE AESTHETIC MATERIALS OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH**

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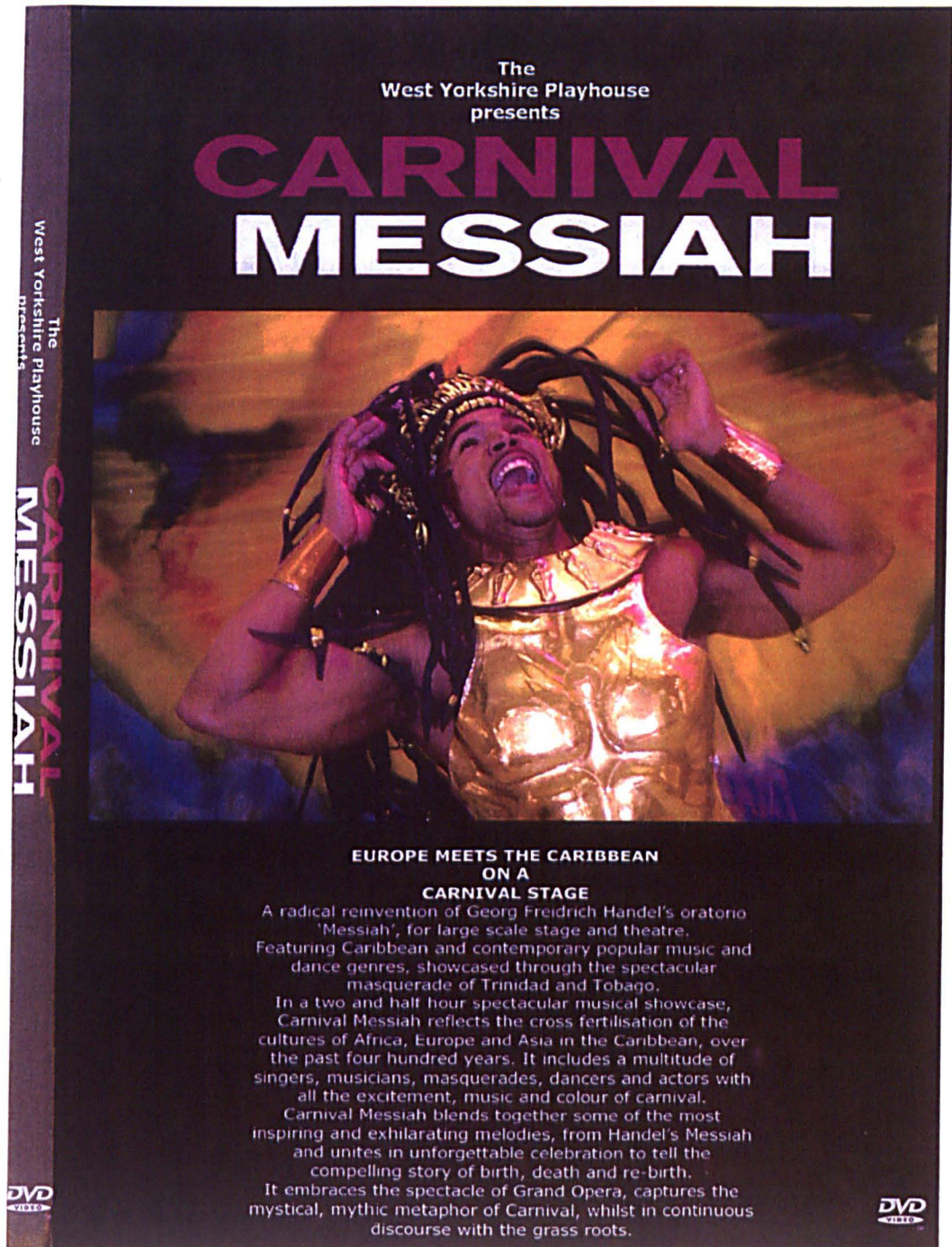
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## APPENDIX: I.1

### THE AESTHETIC MATERIALS OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH

#### CARNIVAL MESSIAH THE DVD

This is presented as two DVD's and placed in the front hard cover of this volume, volume II. The cover credits for the DVD case appear on this page and page 10 of this appendix I.1





### CARNIVAL MESSIAH

**Book by**  
**Music & Lyrics by**

Geraldine Connor & Mark Tillotson  
Geraldine Connor

**Assistant Choreographer**  
**Musical Arranger**  
**Chorus Master**  
**Steelband Director**  
**Sound Designer**  
**Lighting Designer**  
**Musical Director**  
**Choreographer**  
**Masquerade & Costume Designer**  
**Production Designer**  
**Co-director**  
**Artistic Director**

David Hamilton  
Geraldine Connor  
Michael Steele-Eytle  
Dudley Nesbitt  
Glen Massam & Mic Pool  
Robert Bryan  
Michael Lovelock  
Carol La Chapelle  
Clary Salandy  
Wayne Berkeley  
Mark Tillotson  
Geraldine Connor

### CAST (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Mother Earth / 'HalleluiaH' Singer  
Mama God  
Mama God (cover)  
Mama God's alter egos

Shango Adepts

Chantuelle  
Pierrot Grenade  
Robber  
The Seven Minstrels

Mary  
Joseph  
Ragga Storyteller  
Ragga Storyteller's Assistant  
Market Dancer  
Joseph's Brother  
Kathak Dancer  
The Lone Disciple  
Eshu, The Dark Angel  
Pontius Pilate  
Jesus / The Two Thieves

The Dove of Peace  
The Dove's Attendant  
The Gospel Singers

The Evangelist  
The Voice of Truth  
The Carnival Messiah  
The 'HalleluiaH' Singers

J'Quvert Characters / The People of the World,  
The Twelve Disciples

ELLA ANDALL  
JEAN 'BINTA' BREEZE  
MICHELLE SCALLY-CLARKE  
DONALD EDWARDS  
GENEVIEVE SAY  
DAVID HAMILTON  
DONALD EDWARDS  
AYO JONES  
RONALD SAMM  
ALYSON BROWN  
BRIAN GREEN  
ALYSON BROWN  
RONALD SAMM  
JEREMY DOBBS  
BEN FOX  
KERRY FRAMPTON  
RAM JOHN HOLDER  
GLENDA McSWEEN  
BENEDICTE SEIERUP  
NIGEL WONG  
ANNE FRIDAL  
BRIAN GREEN  
TOM BRIGGS-DAVIES  
PAULETTE MORRIS  
DAVID HAMILTON  
RONALD SAMM  
JAYMINI CHAUHAN  
BRIAN GREEN  
DAVID HAMILTON  
JoJo  
ERNEST BREW  
DAVE MITCHELL  
LAURA TUDHOPE  
ALYSON BROWN  
AYO JONES  
COLLEEN SCOTT  
LINDA PELTIER-BINNS  
DAVE MITCHELL  
RONALD SAMM  
ALYSON BROWN  
ELLA ANDALL  
KIRSTY ALMEIDA  
TOM BRIGGS-DAVIES  
STELLA LITRAS  
PAULETTE MORRIS  
CARA ROBINSON  
THE COMPANY

### MUSICIANS

Musical Director and Keyboards  
Keyboards  
Kit Drummer  
Percussion  
Percussion  
Steelpan and Percussion  
Kora and Percussion  
Bass guitar, guitar  
Drums  
Drums  
Pre-recorded introduction to Hosanna: Sitar  
Pre-recorded introduction to Hosanna: Dholak

MICHAEL LOVELOCK  
ROY JOHNSON  
CHARLIE MOORE  
SAM BELL  
DANNY TEMPLEMAN  
DUDLEY NESBITT  
SEIKOU SUSSO  
TOM KIRKPATRICK  
INDY PANESAR  
TESSFA WALTON  
PANDIT NARENDRA MISHRA  
SUKHDEV SINGH NAMDHARI

### THE COMMUNITY CHORUS

Jessica Ahmed, Dan Amis, Leonie Avenant, Hayley Beasley, Marva Bell, Pat Bell, Linda Peltier Binns, Louise Burton, Paula Cunningham, Chantelle Davis, Ruth Dunstan, Emmanuel Egipto, Nkem Emenike, Valeri Frederick, Lyndsey Holmes, Simon Howarth, JoJo, Helen Kennedy, Camilla Limon, Kate Lowe, Sophia Maynard, Saffia Morris, Hayley Mort, Michelle Moseley, Kizzy Neat, Louise Nicoll, Tessa Parr, Emile Peltier, Hannah Pollard, Nicole Quartermain, Bhavini Raval, Joan Redican, Genevieve Say, Ulla Silvennoinen, Lisa Strachan, Laura Tudhope, Kevin Ulaya, Suzanne Vaughan.

### THE CHILDREN'S CHORUS

**PAPAYA TEAM**  
Rachael Frederick, Bianca Gerald, Claire Howarth, Mercedes Somers, Jordan Thompson, Lorenzo Thompson, Carrie Winfield, Danny Winfield.

**GUAVA TEAM**  
Katrina Brown, Olivia Buckley, Nakita Chohan, Maria Dos Santos, Joshua Johnson, Leon Johnson, Kimberley Uster, Anna Silverman, Emma Stokes.

**THE CHOIR COMPANY**  
Rachel Bartlett, Hubert Bell, Sangeeta Chana, Joy Johnson, Ioney King, Colleen Scott, Margaret Smith, Shirleecca Wilkinson, Janet Winfield.

**COMMUNITY STEELBAND**  
Rosalind Coleman, Charlotte Emery, Christopher Friend, Dave Gudgeon, Victoria Jaquiss, Esther Keevash, Natalie Marks, Hayley Miller, Richard Ormond, Stewart Paton, Philip Pemberton, Becky Smith, Christine Smith, Katie Smith, Tanya Sobolewski, Thomas Sobolewski, Jan Spencer, Trish Walsh, Alicia Whitehead, Georgia Witt.

DSM (on the Book)  
Photography: SARAH NORTHGOTT  
KEITH PATTISON & TIM SMITH  
Costume Design Sketches: CLARY SALANDY  
Community Liaison/Chaperone: SHEILA HOWARTH  
Chaperone: AVERIL FREDERICK  
Steelband Liaison: VICTORIA JAQUISS

Video Edited & Package By Ashley Waithe



Directed by Robert Yao Ramersar

www.antfilms@aol.com

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## APPENDIX I.2

### THE AESTHETIC MATERIALS OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH

#### THE CREATIVE TEAM OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH

##### GERALDINE CONNOR

Conceiver, co- writer, composer, arranger and artistic director

Geraldine Connor is a freelance Theatre Director. She recently held a two year appointment as Associate Director (Music) at the West Yorkshire Playhouse (2001 – 2003). An ethnomusicologist by profession, she was a senior teaching fellow on the BA (Hons) Popular Music Studies degree course at the University of Leeds between 1992 – 2004, specialising in all aspects of popular music performance.

A composer, performer, musical director and vocal animator specialising in mainstream rock and pop, Caribbean Carnival, Caribbean folk and African American Gospel, Jazz and Blues styles, Geraldine is perhaps best known for *Carnival Messiah*, which she conceived, authored, composed and directed. In 2001/2002 she directed another major performance project with The Adzido Pan African Dance Ensemble based on the epic of Nana Yaa Asantewaa, Ashanti Queen Mother of nineteenth century Ghana

Geraldine returned from a month long rehearsal process in Haiti in May 2004, where she was pursuing her latest artistic endeavour of directing the production of a new theatrical piece called *Vodou Nation*. This was a contemporary, multi-media reflection of Haiti, its history and its present a place where African, Amerindian, European and Caribbean cultures collide and fuse, a tortured landscape which has produced a dazzling artistic heritage and the powerful and evocative rituals of Vodou. This production is currently touring throughout Britain and features the Haitian based Vodou Rock band, RAM.

Most recently she has directed *Blues in the Night* (West Yorkshire Playhouse 2003), *Vodou Nation* (UK Arts and West Yorkshire Playhouse 2004) and Performance Poet *Ras Anansi-I* for the Edinburgh Festival 2004. She is currently preparing to direct a re-mount of *Blues in the Night* for the West Yorkshire Playhouse's Christmas season 2004.

In her personal bid to activate and reinforce equal opportunity and access as a meaningful tool for social regeneration through education and artistic practice, Geraldine also directs a great deal of her time

toward developing specially focussed community arts projects. She is currently on the Leeds steering committee of the New World Steel Orchestra's School of Pan where she has researched and written the validation document and devised the course curriculum for the project. She is also presently advising, with a view to directing, an upcoming community production called *Moses* which is being developed by Huddersfield Poperetta.

Geraldine's writings on the music and culture of Carnival – *Sound, Emotion and Discovery at Notting Hill Carnival*, have been published by the Arts Council England in their book *On Route*, edited by Pax Nindi( June 2003) and also in the forthcoming Routledge publication (2004) *Culture In Action – Carnival in Leeds and London – Making New Black British Subjectivities* – edited by Professor Milla Cozart Riggio, James, J. Goodwin, Professor of English, Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut.

Other notable artistic credits include *Candyland* (2003:Selfridges) *Fire In Ice* (2002: Selfridges), The Queen's Jubilee Carnival Parade (BBC TV: 2002) *Spirit Global* (2001: Selfridges): *POSITIVE*

(2001:West Yorkshire Playhouse) *Chesa Chesa* (2000: Adzido Pan African Dance Ensemble), *Eulogy* (2000:Frigid Films), *Leeds Leads the Way* (2000: Hall Place studios/Calderdale TV) *Jar the Floor* (1997: West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Legacies* Hall Place Studios (1995:Liverpool Maritime Museum) *Spirit of Carnival* (1994: Kokuma Dance Co: Birmingham Repertory & British tour), *All God's Chillun got Wings*, *The Leeds Centerary Gospel Concert*, *Servant of Two Masters* (1993:West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Yorkshire Black Achievers awards* (1994: West Yorkshire Playhouse), *A Jamaican Airman foresees his Death* (1992:Royal Court Theatre), *Afro-Goth* (1991, BBC Radio 4), *O Babylon* (Talawa Theatre Co 1988: Riverside Studios) *Club Caribe* and *Blaze Band* (1986:Brent Black Music Co-operative) and Ebony Steelband in three landmark performances of *Liszt's Piano Concerto no.1 in Eb* (1996),

In Trinidad and Tobago Geraldine is best known for her work as a leader and musical director of the Holy Name/Queen's Royal College Choir and The Queen's Royal College Recorder Ensemble (1978-1983. As leader and Musical Director of La Petite Musicale (1983 and 1984) As an arranger and player for Invaders Steelband (1977 – 1984).

Her Extra Mural Summer School vocal classes at the University of the West Indies (1988 and 1989) *Nativity*: (1989: Jemma Allong and Andre Tanker). *TakeTwo* (1989: Paul Keenes Douglas) and *Santimanitay* (1989: Peter Minshall), *Journeys of a Lifetime* (1989: Geraldine Connor) Judging the Prime Minister's best Village folk programmes (1977 – 1984). Winning major categories in the Trinidad and Tobago Biennial Music Festival (1976-1984).

In July 2004, Geraldine was nominated for and awarded the National Drama Association of Trinidad and Tobago's Cascique award for the Most Outstanding Director 2003 for her work in *Carnival Messiah*.

Figure 41: Geraldine Connor – Artscene

Trinidad does not appreciate itself or its culture. They take it for granted; because EVERYONE is talented"

Never mind 'dyadic'. What is a 'griot'? "It's a West African singer. They are first referred to in the 12th Century. Whereas in Europe you had scribes, in Africa history was sung. It was a family tradition, a griot's children would maintain the songs."

And Picong? "That's a Caribbean speech style or genre. It's about humour. It's about taking the piss, actually."

And Soca? "It's pronounced 'So-car'. It's a blend of soul and calypso that came into its own in the 70's through Lord Shorty. Before that you had traditional calypso; now you have Rapso (rap and calypso) which is like what they called Ragga Soca

(reggae rapping over a soca beat). They've got all these different genres. They've got Chutney, which is the Indian stuff mixed over the calypso..."

And 'Bom bom puddi bom bom'? "(laughter). Bassman! It's a very famous song and it's a great one, written by Shadow in the 70s. It changed the face of calypso. Everybody sings that chorus."

'Carnival Messiah' is at the Queens Hall in Trinidad and Tobago from July 29 to 29.



Artist by Vic Allen  
Picture by Porl Medlock

# Geraldine Connor

*The devisor of 'Carnival Messiah' wants to take it to Broadway; but before that, there's somewhere even more important*

□ Artscene Page 4

She is an esteemed ethnomusicologist who chairs global symposia. Hours before we met she had given a paper at a conference in Harewood House. So presumably she wasn't the 'Geraldine Connor' singing on a 1988 album by the hippy prog-rock group, The Enid?

"Yes I am," she says seriously. And then screams, sending a shock wave through the West Yorkshire Playhouse café. "Oh my GAWD! The Seed and the Sower! I worked with those guys quite a while. They were lovely."

We weren't really surprised. We knew she'd wallpapered vocals for Bob Marley; but it was the Enid's blend of Wagner and Wah-Wah pedals that made us half-guess the truth.

If it's dyadic, then Geraldine is probably involved. If she's a trainee opera singer, she's also in a TV 'light ents' backing group (The Sunbeams); if she's singing with Milly Jackson, she's also directing the music for 'Babylon' by the portentous Nobel Prize-winner Derek Walcott.

Her defining achievement, 'The Carnival Messiah', splices Handel with calypso, stage with street – and would have been a glittering disaster, if it hadn't proved an implacable success.

This July, the show that began as a student project at Bretton Hall in 1994, blossomed at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in 2002, and went on to win the Notting Hill Carnival – opens at The Queen's Hall in Trinidad.

For Geraldine it's less a dream come true than a fantasy hijacked by reality.

Carnival has a surfeit of everything; including origins. If it was a baby it would have five navels. 'Camboulay' is significant, though: a festival where West Indies plantation owners 'blacked up' and danced. Evidently it was just too good to let go because the workers chose to continue it, even as emancipation took its slow effect. It seduces the imagination and feeds the memory, as Geraldine – who readily recalls a 40 year-old scene of Lilliputian calypso singers

swarming around a giant Gulliver – can testify.

And since memories clothe identity, it was not only appropriate that the response to the "race" riots of 1958 should have been the Leeds and Notting Hill Carnivals; but inevitable that this should have meshed with the politics of Black identity in the UK. "Carnival started in those places because people felt there was nothing in the existing society where they could be themselves," says Geraldine. "All the UK carnivals are tools of integration, tools of identity. It is a subtle, political tool. It is a non-confrontational tool against racism".

Geraldine – who has been privy to the bumbling bureaucracy and greed which has throttled the Notting Hill Carnival – maintains that this political dimension is implicit in 'Carnival Messiah'. But it will mean nothing in Trinidad. There, she has a different political mission.

"Trinidad does not appreciate itself or its culture. They take it for granted; because EVERYONE is talented. We have some amazing artists, painters, singers, directors... but they don't believe in paying the artists for their time at all. Most of the artists are very depressed about their situation. I have already been perceived as 'taking what is rightfully theirs'".

Gulliver's Travels is not Geraldine's earliest memory. She can recall climbing into the sheepskin womb of a Rolls Royce on the way to a West End theatre. It had been hired for her father, Edric Connor. A renowned baritone singer, he performed with the RSC (in 'Pericles') a year before Paul Robeson; acted in films such as 'The Vikings', and made one of the first films on cricket. He also collated a seminal book of Trinidadian folk songs and, with Geraldine's mother, set up the first black theatrical agency in Britain – 'Pearl Connor Management'. Through the Caribbean Artists Movement they not only knew George Lamming, but were visited in Lancaster Gate by both CLR James and (gasp!) Martin Luther King.

Not that Geraldine remembers them. At the age of 8 she and her younger brother went to live with her grandparents in Trinidad. "That was the most fortunate thing that ever happened to me. If you want to draw a line to the 'Carnival Messiah', that is where I first started to make comparisons".

Eight years later she returned to Camden School for Girls, where her choral activities led to an almost incidental scholarship to the Royal College of Music. Four years studying opera persuaded her to 'take a year out' (it proved to be 8 years) in Trinidad, where she taught boys in Queens Royal College (some of whom she now works with). "That was when I started to investigate things like folk songs".

She formed a joint choir with a friend. It toured Europe; and it wasn't small. "There were 90 of them. I suppose since I saw Gullivers Travels – seeing thousands of people doing carnival – I found it very hard not to 'do epic'!"

She joined a steelband in 1977 (she has just written a definitive teaching module for

steelband playing). Then came 1984, and a dramatic exit. "I got on a plane and came back to England. I'd just had enough of teaching. As you do. I think the Ministry of Education is still looking for me".

Geraldine laughs a lot. But it's not an open torrent; rather it spills over the brim of something. There's a depth behind it. "I'm an extremely private person, actually" she says at one point; and it's evident that her various achievements conceal (as befits a teacher) a vast amount of hidden preparation.

Back in England she went freelance; learning about record production at the Brent Black Music Co-op, before returning, yet again, to Trinidad. She was still there in 1992, when she was invited to start a multicultural music course at the Leeds College of Music. She loved (and loves) Yorkshire, but the course never happened. "It was a very male-dominated environment and very old-fashioned and they just did not know what to do with me".

She started a choir at the Mandela Centre (it performs, as 'Black Expression', to this day) and then perversely applied for a junior post at Bretton Hall. It was thanks to this that she could co-opt 30 white students for a mixed choir in the West Yorkshire Playhouse Production of Eugene O'Neill's 'All God's Chillun Got Wings'.

And it was thanks to this in turn that she drew the attention of the Playhouse's erstwhile director, Jude Kelly. "Jude allowed 'Carnival Messiah' to happen. Nobody else in their right minds would have. She trusted us and we got it right, thank god. She's been wonderful".

The blend of music in 'Carnival Messiah' has excited much debate, but for Geraldine the high/low art split is specious. "The difference people put between the two types of music is a social difference. It's not an aesthetic difference at all. They have the same meaning to me, and I can manipulate them both in the same way. You see, I think musically when I cross barriers, I'm crossing barriers of identity, or representation, or marginality. I'm dealing with all of that."

The 'transgressive' nature of carnival is regularly noted by academics (Geraldine amongst them) but we wondered... hadn't Geraldine gentrified it by putting it on stage?

Where is the uncensored vitality of street carnival; specifically the 'grotesqueness' that can be a source of often disturbing potency?

"In carnival you can be subversive; you can turn, change, do whatever you want. And you can do it free of criticism," agrees Geraldine. "If you look at the traditional enactment in the jouvert, then you see the grotesque. There are all sorts of underpinnings and things that go on in there... but there are also many pleasurable things."

She has a Teflon positivity. There's a part of street carnival where an androgynous acrobat on stilts – the Mocko Jumbie – is judged according to three grades: 'Good, Better, and Best'... There's no doubt that Geraldine Connor ranks somewhere amongst them too.



**WAYNE BERKELEY**

**Production Designer**

Production Designer Wayne Berkeley is best known for his designs in the Carnival arena however he has also worked extensively in Theatre. In Trinidad and Tobago he designed the winning carnival 'Band of the year' award a record eleven times including six consecutively for 1989 to 1994. He also designed the winning 'Queen of the Bands' costumes a record twelve times. Some of his prize winning bands include *Secrets of the Sky, Kaleidoscope, Titanic, Strike up the Band, Mirage, Rain Forest* and *Amarant*. Wayne has worked internationally in several major cities, including Las Vegas, Montreal, New York, Paris, London, Leeds, Munich Caracas and throughout the Caribbean. He designed the Caribbean exhibit for the last World Fair in Seville and a mural for the Grenada government. His Stage designs include *Carnival Messiah, Romeo and Juliet, Twelfth Night, The Pirates of Penzance, Guys and Dolls, Equus and Xante*. Opera designs include *Carmen, Die Fledermaus, The Merry Widow, Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Il Pagliacci*.

Wayne's first love is Broadway and he has produced and directed his own Broadway shows over the past seven years. He also designed the stage set for the finale of the 1999 Miss Universe beauty Pageant.

In 2001 Wayne suffered a severe and debilitating stroke. His determination has led him to continue drawing and designing with his left hand since he lost the complete use of the other. Wayne continues against all odds to work with the Carnival Messiah team and was responsible for re-designing a new ramped spiral stage for use on the precinium stage of Queen's Hall's Trinidad and Tobago's productions in 2003 and 2004.

In July 2004, Wayne was nominated for and awarded the National Drama Association of Trinidad and Tobago's Casique award for the Most Outstanding Production Designer 2003 and a lifetime award for his design work in Carnival and the Theatre.

**CAROLE LA CHAPELLE**

**Choreographer**

Carol La Chapelle is an international choreographer and performer in her own right, utilising the Caribbean dance performance aesthetic in many imaginative and original ways. She resides in Trinidad has served for many years as Dance Director for the Poet laureate Derek Walcott's Trinidad Theatre Workshop. There she choreographed the premiere productions of Joker of Seville commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company and the American premiere performances of Odyssey.

Highlights of her many choreographic credits include Dream on Monkey Mountain (Trinidad Theatre Workshop) and Celebration (Boston Playwright's Theatre) and Carnival Messiah (West Yorkshire Playhouse). Carol has also worked with directors Albert La Veau, Rawle Gibbons, Earl Warner, Greg Doran, Doug Warner and Anton Phillips. She has been awarded in Trinidad and Tobago, Actress Of The Year and the Cascique Award for Choreography.

Carole has just completed choreographing Vodou Nation for UK Arts International. This is a contemporary, multi-media reflection of Haiti, its history and its present a place where African, Amerindian, European and Caribbean cultures collide and fuse, a tortured landscape which has produced a dazzling artistic heritage and the powerful and evocative rituals of Vodou. This production is currently touring throughout Britain and features the Haitian based Vodou Rock band, RAM.

Her company La Chapelle Dance has featured Caribbean artists from Martinique and Cuba as well as Martha Graham principal and choreographer Peter London. The company has appeared with Karen Kain, Melba Moore, Jose Feliciano and Bob Marley.

Over the years, Carol has developed her own unique teaching and assessment protocols linked specifically to Carnival and the choreography of Carnival.

In July 2004, Carole was nominated for and awarded the National Drama Association of Trinidad and Tobago's Cascique award for the Most Outstanding Choreographer 2003.

**Figure 42:** Carole La Chapelle and Mark Tillotson



## **CLARY SALANDY**

### **Costume design**

Clary Salandy is a Carnival and Theatre designer. She was responsible for designing and co-ordinating the Queen's Jubilee Carnival Parade in June 2002. Over the years she has become known for her award winning Carnival work which truly reflects the versatility of the artform. She has also for many years lectured in three-dimensional design at the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture

During the past ten years, she has produced work on the streets of many of the world's capital cities as artistic director of Mahogany arts. She has just returned from India on one such project. She initiated Europe's first and only carnival retail gallery as a resource for those interested in Carnival as an artform. It is from this space that she creates her sculptural costumes while training members of the local community in street performance and costume making.

Her designs have featured in the opening ceremony of the Millenium Dome in London, the millennium celebrations for Chinese New Year in Singapore, the opening and closing ceremonies of Euro'96 and numerous theatre productions, the most recent being for the *Chesa*

*Chesa* and *Yaa Asantewaa* productions for Adzido Pan African Dance Theatre,

Mahogany Arts won London's Notting Hill Carnival Masquerade Band of the Year 2000 with its portrayal of *Carnival Messiah, A Unique Street Experience*.

In July 2004, Clary was nominated for and awarded the National Drama Association of Trinidad and Tobago's Casique award for the Most Outstanding Costume Designer 2003.

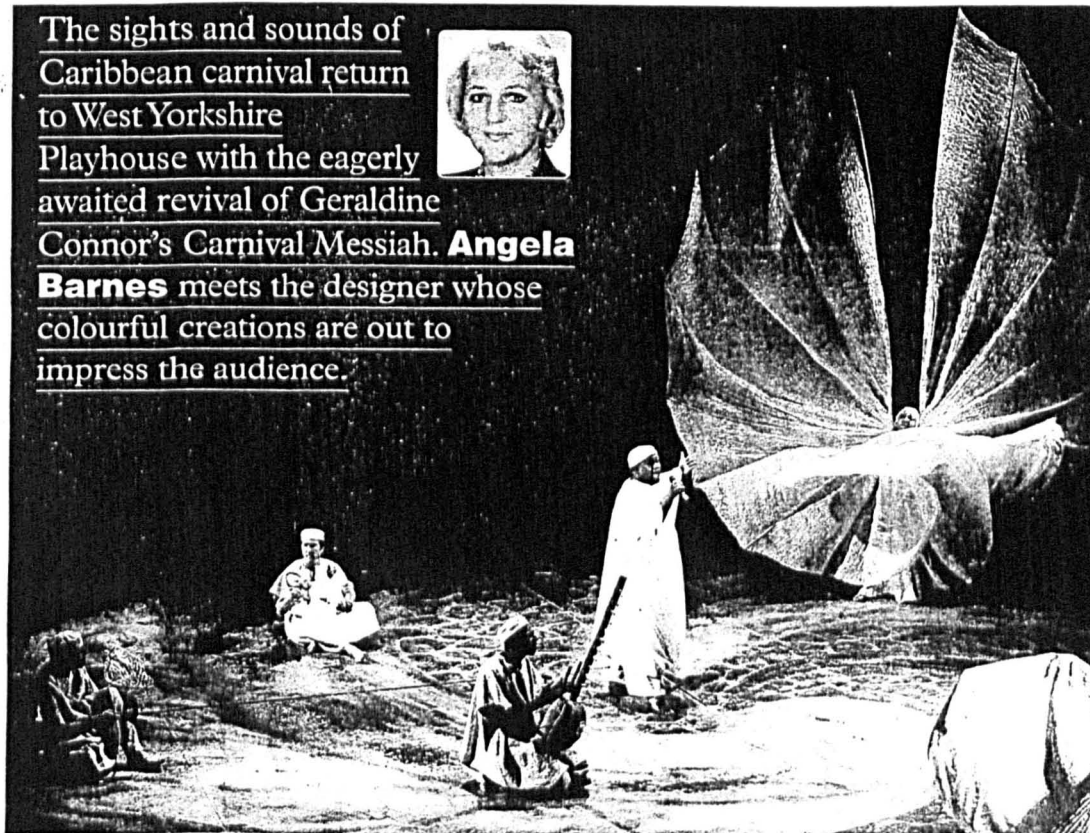
**Figure 43: Clary Salandy at work**



SUBJECT:  
PUBLICATION:  
DATE:

CARNIVAL MESSIAH  
YORKSHIRE EVENING POST  
18 JUNE 2002

The sights and sounds of Caribbean carnival return to West Yorkshire Playhouse with the eagerly awaited revival of Geraldine Connor's *Carnival Messiah*. **Angela Barnes** meets the designer whose colourful creations are out to impress the audience.



# Clary's costumes steal the show

**C**ARNIVAL *Messiah* exploded onto the West Yorkshire Playhouse stage in 1999, thrilling audiences with its exuberant energy. Now all the spectacle and colour of the Caribbean is returning to Leeds.

The electrifying musical, combining song, dance and spectacle was a sell out when first premiered here. Geraldine Connor's *Carnival Messiah* is a vibrant re-invention of Handel's celebratory oratorio and boasts a company of over 100 performers.

Connor who has conceived, directed and adapted the spectacle, has creatively combined singers, musicians, masqueraders, dancers and actors with inspiring melodies.

But complementing the action are around 700 enormous glittering costumes, including spectacular winged outfits over 20ft high for the characters of Mama God, Eshu The Dark Angel, the Dove of Peace and *Carnival Messiah*, all designed by Clary Salandy.

Salandy, a carnival/theatre designer, lecturer and tutor of three dimensional design has over the years become known for her award-winning carnival work, which reflects the versatile nature of the art form. During the past decade she has produced work on the streets of many of the world's capital cities.

Of *Carnival Messiah* she says: "It's lovely, fun to do. Quite a challenge but there is such a good



team here so it is not as hard. It is exciting to deal with all these different things."

Clary is from Trinidad and she came to London to study. At first music was her forte but in the end she chose art instead and in particular, because of the influence of her culture, theatre design.

"I come from a very musical family and have always been part of carnival. The first I remember was at three-years-old. I was dressed as a fairy with little wings. I can't tell you the colour of my costume. My photo is in black and white. But I won the prize. I also remember sitting on the shoulders of mum and dad during the carnival so I could see.

## Exciting

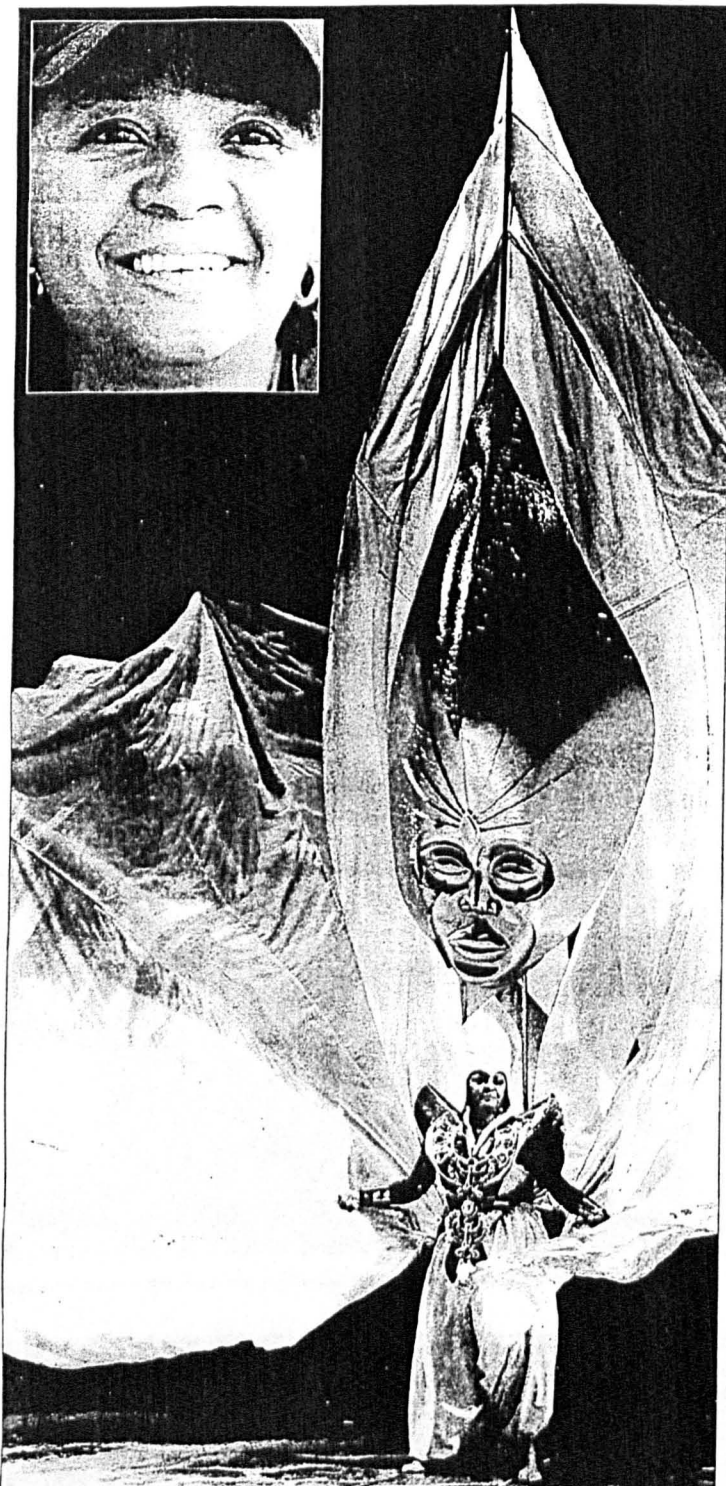
"It is a 6am start, a festival open-day. People cover themselves in mud, paint or dye and go out into the streets for a free for all. Let's go out and dance is the cry, the drums are going and it is quite an exciting time.

"The carnival lasts for two days, the Monday and Tuesday before Lent, and is so flamboyant - 2,000 paraders performing. The effect of thousands of costumes is absolutely amazing. It makes my 700 seem like nothing.

"The closest we have seen here is the aerial shots of The Mall for the Queen's Jubilee. That was spectacular."

Clary's future potential was given a major boost while at the Wimbledon School of Art, studying theatre design, when she helped out at the Notting Hill Carnival. This was her first





● SPECTACULAR: Carnival Messiah costume designer Clary Salamdy and some of her magnificent creations.

experience of carnival in Britain and she took to it like a duck to water.

"It's about design interpretation. It's either a case of someone being told to do everything or someone telling everyone else what should be done." Needless to say, she fell into the latter category.

"The first costume I designed was a huge yellow flower, the petals were very vibrant, cane and fibre glass hoops gave a wonderful curving form." She got a prize for that too.

"You imagine, you draw. You're not 100 per cent

sure what the end result will be like. So when it is there, it is a fabulous moment. You feel as if you have really achieved something. It's phenomenal."

Clary's talents were picked up by a television programme, spotlighting students of the day who were going to be artists of the future. "I was chosen as theatre designer of the future," she says. And she's never looked back.

Designing for carnival bands gave her a lot of experience. At the time there was not a lot of black theatre designers. "There was always

someone wanting me to do something," she recalls

Then in 1989, Clary decided to start her own company, Mahogany Arts Ltd. Since then she has initiated Europe's first carnival arts retail gallery and from this space she produces innovative carnival work whilst training members of her local community to be both street performers and costume makers. Mahogany performed at UNESCO in Paris as part of the International Women's Day celebrations and were the designers and makers of the opening and closing ceremonies of Euro '96. They produced a range of costumes for the opening ceremonies of the Millennium Dome and co-ordinated the Notting Hill Carnival procession for Her Majesty, The Queen's televised Golden Jubilee celebrations. They also did the opening ceremony for the Millennium celebrations in Singapore for the Chinese New Year.

### Inspiration

"I became involved with *Carnival Messiah* back in 1994 when Geraldine Connor was doing a pilot and looking for costumes, linked with a spiritual theme. I had done a queen, *Symphony of Light*, for Notting Hill. The costume is still an inspiration now. It was selected to be part of the show.

"Then for the premiere in 1999, I was the designer. This time round we are using most of the same costumes with bits added. People loved the show at the time. Some came back three times. Every night was a standing ovation. So the audience wants to see what they saw before. "Refurbishing the costumes started at the end of April (particularly the head-dresses) because we have got different people wearing them. However, we have some people who took part in the pilot - children who were seven or eight then and who have a long standing relationship with the show, which is exciting.

"It is very difficult to choose my favourite outfit, between *The Dove* and the *Carnival Messiah*. *The Dove* is plain, white, gently beautiful. It almost brings you to tears. The last character, *Carnival Messiah*, is very colourful, very vibrant and it takes your breath away for different reasons. It is part of the hallelujah scene, part of the crescendo. Tongues of fire, reds, oranges and yellow."

It usually takes Clary three to four weeks to do a costume, depending on the team of workers. "I am anxious not nervous. I am wanting to see the show again because it got such a lovely reception. Everyone wants to see it again. It has a nice long run and I am hoping it will have a life after," she adds.

The professional company performing in *Carnival Messiah*, drawn from the world of theatre, opera, dance and masquerade, includes many who appeared in the original production which premiered at the Playhouse.

### Calypso

Ram John Holder (Minstrel) is known best for his role as Porkpie in *C4's Desmonds*. He has also appeared more recently in the film, *Lucky Break*, alongside James Nesbitt. His theatre work includes *God Bless* (Royal Shakespeare Company). *Mama God* (narrator) is played by Jean 'Binta' Breeze, a poet and performer of international standing. Ella Andall, meanwhile, is one of the world's three leading female Calypso singers and has travelled from Trinidad to appear as *Mother Earth* in *Carnival Messiah*. Ann P Fridal (Mary), from Trinidad and Tobago, but now resident in the USA, is the first international opera singer to bridge the gap between Opera Calypso and the Steelpan. Alyson Brown, a lead masquerader for the international carnival designer, Peter Minshall, plays the *Dove of Peace* and David Hamilton, founder of both Phoenix and the RJC Dance Company is *Eshu the Dark Angel*.

In addition to the professional company Geraldine Connor has recruited over 60 people from local communities to create an adult chorus of 43, comprising of a children's chorus of 20 (10 per show) and eight singers in the community choir. As well as appearing in the production, the community chorus will benefit from a *Carnival Messiah* education programme validated by the University of Leeds.

*Carnival Messiah* is supported by the Spirit of Friendship Festival, a national celebration of the Commonwealth Games and the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

It promises to be one of the most important, spectacular and memorable theatre events this year.

*Carnival Messiah*, West Yorkshire Playhouse, runs from June 22 to July 27. Box Office: 0113 213 7700.

angela.branes@wypn.co.uk

# Costume for Carnival Messiah by our very own Clary!

**CLARY** Salandy is a true ambassador for Carnival. A former St. Joseph's resident who has been living in England for over 20 years, she has dedicated her creative skills to showcasing this country's main cultural export to the world.

Little wonder then, that Salandy has teamed up with Geraldine Connor to design costumes for Carnival Messiah.

She was sought out by Nicholas Boisselle, who was the original designer for Carnival Messiah. Salandy provided the large Symphony of Light costume for the Hallelujah scene, among others. She has stayed with the production since.

When asked about the costumes, Salandy said those designed for Carnival characters were not ex-

act replications of the original designs but more based on her imagination.

She said because Carnival Messiah was first staged for a foreign audience, it was more important to show cultural influences and creativity in the design rather than focus on details that meant nothing to those audiences who never experienced Carnival.

This is something local audiences must keep in mind when they go to see the production and realise that the Dame Lorraine or Pierrot Grenade look different from what we have become accustomed to.

Owner of Mahogany, a company dedicated to designing and creating Carnival costumes, Salandy is thrilled to see Carnival Messiah in Trinidad.

"I am extremely excit-



"CLARINDA Salandy, Masquerade and Costume Designer is assisted by Nicholas Boisselle as she prepares for Carnival Messiah"



"CLARINDA Salandy assist Alyson Brown with the very well known costume entitled "The Wings" from the Carnival Messiah"

ed. It was accepted no, overwhelmingly received with warmth. People came three and four times to see it, brought their children," she said.

Salandy said the first positive reviews of Carnival in the UK came from those who witnessed Carnival Messiah. "You never get good reviews about Carnival. With Nottingham, you only get the negative. But people who are afraid to go to Nottingham, will go to Carnival Messiah and come away with an understanding of black people, the culture, who we are," she said.

Salandy, who was in-

involved in injecting Carnival into Millennium celebrations in Singapore and at the opening of the Millennium Dome in London, said she does lots of events, but she will always do Carnival "to open people's eyes to the truth of our community."

Carnival Messiah runs from July 21 to 29, 2003, the show starts promptly at 8pm (seating at 7.50pm) and tickets are priced at \$150, \$200 and \$250 and are available at Carnival Messiah and come away with an understanding of black people, the culture, who we are," she said.

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"ON stage rehearsals"



"CLARY smiling"

**MARK TILLOTSON**  
**Co – writer and Co – Director**

Mark Tillotson trained at Bretton Hall College, Jacques Lecoq and Phillip Gaullier. He has worked all his professional life touring with companies including Mark Mark productions specialising in, commedia del'arte, pantomime and physical theatre. Until June 2000 Mark worked as a director and teacher at Bretton Hall College.

His directing credits include *The Servant of Two Masters, The Venetian Twins, A Christmas Carol, The Comedy of Errors and The Real Inspector Hound*. He has also been responsible for directing many pantomimes at Wakefield Theatre Royal. Recent directorial credits includes *Mystere Bouff* and *The last Musketeers*.

*Teatro Fromaggio* is a new company of which he is a founder member: An experimental touring company, they will be working towards fusing comic methodologies including commedia, bouffon, fantasique and grotesque.

Mark Tillotson has collaborated on the Carnival Messiah project since its inception in 1994 . He has particularly been responsible for the theatrical interpretation and narrative of the Seven Minstrels.

## **MICHAEL LOVELOCK**

### **Musical Director**

Michael Lovelock worked alongside Andre Tanker as assistant musical director on the 1999 West Yorkshire Playhouse production of *Carnival Messiah*. He was however responsible for all the preliminary musical development work of *Carnival Messiah* and then went on to perform on keyboards and direct the band for the duration of the run. He has been the musical director for all the consequent productions of *Carnival Messiah* including 2002, 2003 and 2004. Michael trained at Bretton Hall College. He is a multi-talented musician, playing a variety of keyboard instruments, (in a variety of styles) acoustic, electric and bass guitars, drum kit and cello. As well as being a skilled engineer, transcriber, arranger and musical director, he is also an accomplished singer/songwriter and producer.

In 2000 he completed his first national tour *Just Getting Started* which encompassed local churches and other venues and showcased his own contemporary brand of Christian music. In 2001, he topped the UK christian radio playlist with his single *Rising Up* receiving an

enthusiastic 8/10 from the Cross Rhythms Christian music magazine.

He appeared live on the God channel in 2001.

### **MICHAEL STEELE-EYTLE**

#### **Chorale Director**

Before Micheal Steele-Eytle left Trinidad to pursue his professional career in teaching in Philadelphia, he co-founded and co-directed with Geraldine Connor, *The Holy Name Convent/Queen's Royal College Choir* and *Family and Friends* as well as founding and conducting the *Palo Seco Senior Comprehensive Choir*. Micheal was Choral Director for the 1999, 2002 and 2003 productions of *Carnival Messiah*.

Micheal has conducted many of the world's leading orchestras including the Savaria Symphony orchestra (Hungary), Budapest Symphony orchestra and the Bach Collegium Orchestra (Stuttgart).

In the United States he conducted at the Oregon Bach Festival under the direction of Helmuth Rilling, for Opera Ebony for their tenth anniversary celebrations and performance of Handel's *Messiah* at Newmann College, Aston, Pennysylvania.

In Trinidad he conducted numerous performances for stage, radio and television including *The Gondoliers and Carmen*. Micheal has been the Associate Music Director and Chorus Master for Temple Opera Company's productions of *Trial by Jury, HMS Pinafore, The Marriage of Figaro, Hansel and Gretel, Orpheus in the Underworld, L'enfant et les Sorteleges and Die Sieben Todsunden der Kleinburger*.

Since 1996 he has been the Artistic Director of the annual multi-cultural festival at the John Bartram High School, Philadelphia.

**ROBERT BRYAN**

**Lighting Designer**

Born in Derby, and a science graduate from Hull University, Robert was an early founder of Theatre Projects Ltd, under the leadership of Richard Pilbrow. He was resident lighting designer at Glynbourne and at the Royal opera House for many years. His career has included lighting plays, musicals and operas throughout the world. This has led him to work in all the major opera houses and drama theatres worldwide.

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Among the distinguished directors and designers he has worked with are John Barton, Michael Blakemore, Michael Boyd, Terry Johnson, Braham Murray, Matthew Lloyd, John Cox, Goetz Friedrich, Sir Peter Hall, Terry Johnson, Jonathan Miller, Christopher Morahan, Elijah Moshinsky, Adrian Noble, Trevor Nunn, Peter Wood, John Gunther, Richard Hudson, Stefanos Lazarides, Timothy O'Brien, Carl Toms Giovanni Angostinucci, Johanna Bryant, Roger Butlin, Bob Crowley, Eileen Diss, David Ultz, Michael Yeargen, Timothy O'Brien, Richard Hudson, Simon Higlett Mathias Fischer-Discau, John Gunter and Roni Toren.

For the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Robert has designed the lighting for the original production of *Carnival Messiah* 1999/2002, *Singing in the Rain* 2001/2002 and *Blues in the Night* 2003.

## MIC POOL

### Sound Designer

In a twenty-six year career in theatre sound, Mic Pool has been resident at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, The Royal Court Theatre and Tyne Theatre Company and toured internationally with Ballet Rambert. He has designed the sound for over three hundred productions, including more than one hundred and fifty for the West Yorkshire Playhouse, where he is currently Director of Creative Technology. He received a TMA award in 1992 for Best Designer (Sound) for *Life is a Dream* and was nominated for both the Lucille Lortel and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Sound design 2001, for the New York production of *The Unexpected Man*.

Recent theatre credits include *Brand*, (RSC and Haymarket Theatre, London); *Pretending to be me* (West Yorkshire Playhouse and West End); *Art* (West End, Broadway and worldwide); *Shockheaded Peter* (Cultural Industry world tour and West End); *The Unexpected Man* (West End and Broadway); *Another Country* (Arts Theatre); *My Dad's Corner Shop* (Derby Playhouse); *Dead Funny* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Hijra* (Bush Theatre, Plymouth Theatre Royal and West Yorkshire



Playhouse); *Beauty and The Beast, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Seagull, Victoria, Romeo and Juliet, Twelfth Night* and *The late Shakespeare Plays* at the Roundhouse (RSC); *The Seagull, The Tempest, Naked Justice, Broken Glass, Inconceivable, Johnson Over Jordan, Dangerous Corner, Wden End, Horse and Carriage, The Lady in the Van, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Hamlet, Larkin With Womne, Pretending To Be Me, Four Knights in Knaresborough, The Accrington Pals, A Small Family Business, Off Camera, The Madness of King George III, Medea, Blues In The Night* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Smoking With Lulu* (West Yorkshire Playhouse and Soho Theatre, London).

Video work for theatre includes *Two Tracks and Text Me, The Wizard Of Oz, Johnson Over Jordan* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Dangerous Corner* (West Yorkshire Playhouse and West End); *Singin' In The Rain* (West Yorkshire Playhouse, Royal National Theatre and national tour); *The Turk In Italy, Il Trovatore* (ENO); *The Ring Cycle* (New National Theatre, Tokyo); *Il Tabarro* (WNO max); *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (West Yorkshire Playhouse Schools Company).

Television credits include: Sound Design for *How Wide Is Your Sky?* (Channel 4).

**DAVID HAMILTON**

**Assistant Choreographer**

David is the Associate Choreographer for *Carnival Messiah* (2002/1999). His most recent artistic venture is the *Roots Regeyeshun* Dance Theatre for which he is artistic director. This is an exciting new company which showcases dance and poetry that is firmly rooted within Reggae culture.

David is one of the founder members of Phoenix Dance and more recently a founder member of RJC Dance Company. Shows for RJC include *Captured* (1996) *Passionell* (1997) *Language, Life and Respect* (1998) and *Jus ezee* (1999).

David toured Southern and South Africa in September/October 1998, visiting Botswana, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Namibia, Durban and Mozambique. Previous work for the West Yorkshire Playhouse includes *The World Goes Round* and *Granny and the Gorilla*.

He is currently developing a Theatre in Education project on Frederick Douglas, in collaboration with Joe Williams and Diane McIntyre at the West Yorkshire Playhouse.

**DUDLEY NESBITT**

**Steelband Director**

Dudley was born in Trinidad and Tobago and started playing steel pans at the age of eight. Whilst there, he was a member of a leading steelband, Petrotin Invaders. He then spent eighteen years arranging music for Silver harps Steel orchestra, leading them to the National panorama Steelband Finals on several occasions.

During the 1980's, Dudley made several short term visits to England, to arrange music for Steelbands in Yorkshire and for the Leeds West Indian Carnival. In 1990, Dudley began working as a peripatetic teacher for the Leeds Music Support Service. He remains in full-time employment with the service at present, while also working part-time for the Wakefield Music Service.

Dudley plays regularly as a gigging musician on the Leeds music scene, at a variety of venues, locally and nationally with Pan Jumby, a group of five musicians who play calypso-jazz and Latin-jazz.

### **ANDRE TANKER**

#### **Musical Supervisor**

Andre Tanker is considered to be the greatest practicing composer and musician of the Caribbean contemporary music genre in Trinidad and Tobago. He plays guitar, flute, vibraphone and blues harp. His work spans producing music for films, theatre, concerts, and recording and arranging for the steelband.

He has written original music scores for numerous films and plays including: *The Blessing of Charlie Sand* (film;1998) *What My Mother Told Me* (Channel Four television:1994) *Ti Jean and His Brothers* (Play:1993) *Measure For Measure* (New York Shakespeare Festival:1993) *Playboy of the West Indies* (Lincoln Centre Theatre), *The Nativity – Birth in a Panyard* (Trinidad Theatre Studio:1989) *Ti Jean and Mariquite* (Play:1988) *Monster March* (Play:1987), *The Dragon Can't Dance* (Play:1986), *Turn of the Tide* (Film:1986)

*Trinidad and Tobago in the eighties* (Documentary) *Anansi Story* (Play:1982) and *Bim* (Film:1973).

Andre and his band *One World Contraband* have toured worldwide including the Caribbean, USA, UK and Italy. His many recordings include the acclaimed *Children of the Big Bang*. In 2002 he had major success collaborating with 3 canal on the Carnival hit *Ben Lion*. He is currently working on an extended piece *IERE 21*.

Sadly on Carnival Friday, February 2003, he passed away. In his own inimitable fashion, he contributed to the overall musicality of Carnival Messiah in a way no one else could and has left a lasting impression on all those of the Carnival Messiah family who met and worked with him.

## **APPENDIX I: I.3**

### **THE AESTHETIC MATERIAL OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH**

#### **PRODUCTION PROTOCOLS OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH**

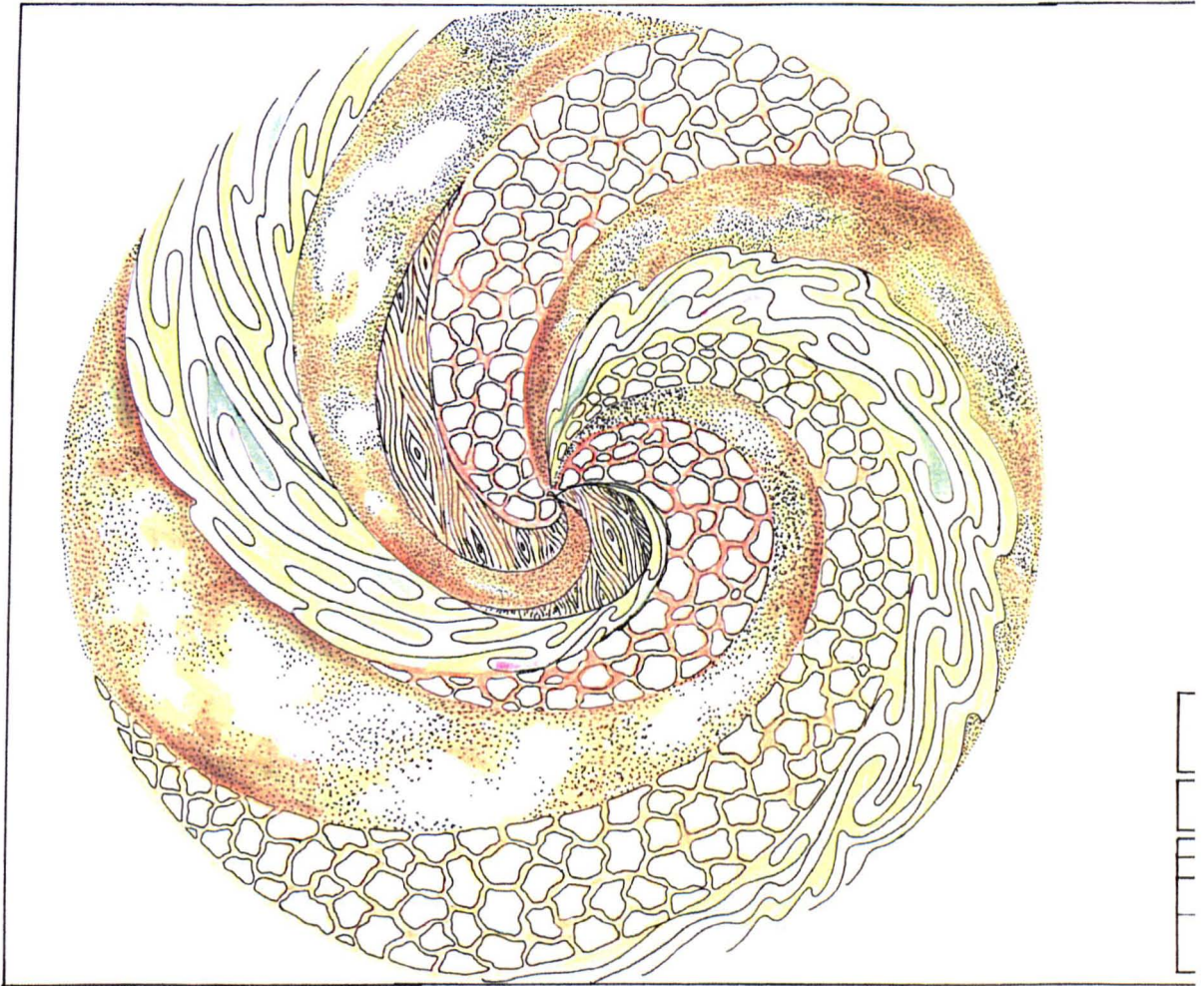
##### **THE SET DESIGN**

African society clearly proclaims its belief in the power of the circle, the circle is regarded as a symbol of continuity. This is exemplified through numerous examples such as house design, sculpture and the communal features of shared work, finances and hospitality. The dancer in the middle of the circle, the call and response litanic vocal cycle. The circle in effect represents the life-cycle: birth, initiation, marriage and death. 'Unity, order and harmony are expressed through the circle, (Durant:1993:Private interview). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Wayne Berkeley chose to place the production design of Carnival Messiah securely within a circle. In his own words

**"The Main Stage Area ".....Almost a Gayal.....The Stage , Circular in Shape , about 40 feet in diameter . Painted in shapes to symbolize earth , water , muddy areas , wood areas with rocks and stones , all coming from a central point and meandering towards the perimeter , bounded by a rim of deep, Dark , Black. The main action was restrained to the painted area , and the Black was off stage. All the painting was very abstract, and almost neutral. (For the Trinidad and Tobago productions in 2003 and 2004) At the front of the stage , which was part of the gigantic circle , was constructed A large ramp**

which started at floor level and meandered its way up to meet the main stage” (Berkeley:2004: Private email correspondence).

**Figure 46: The Floor – The Design**



**Figure 47: The Floor – The Trinidad floor Design**

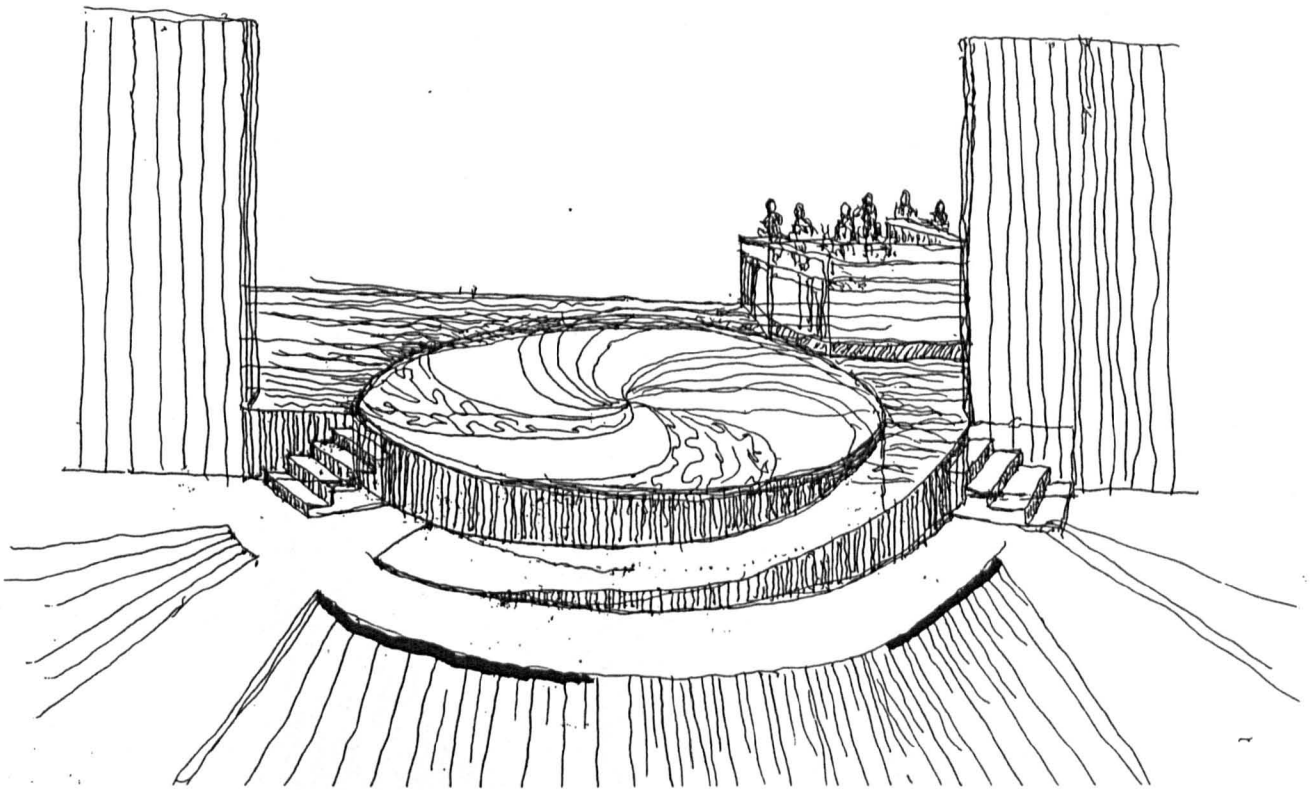
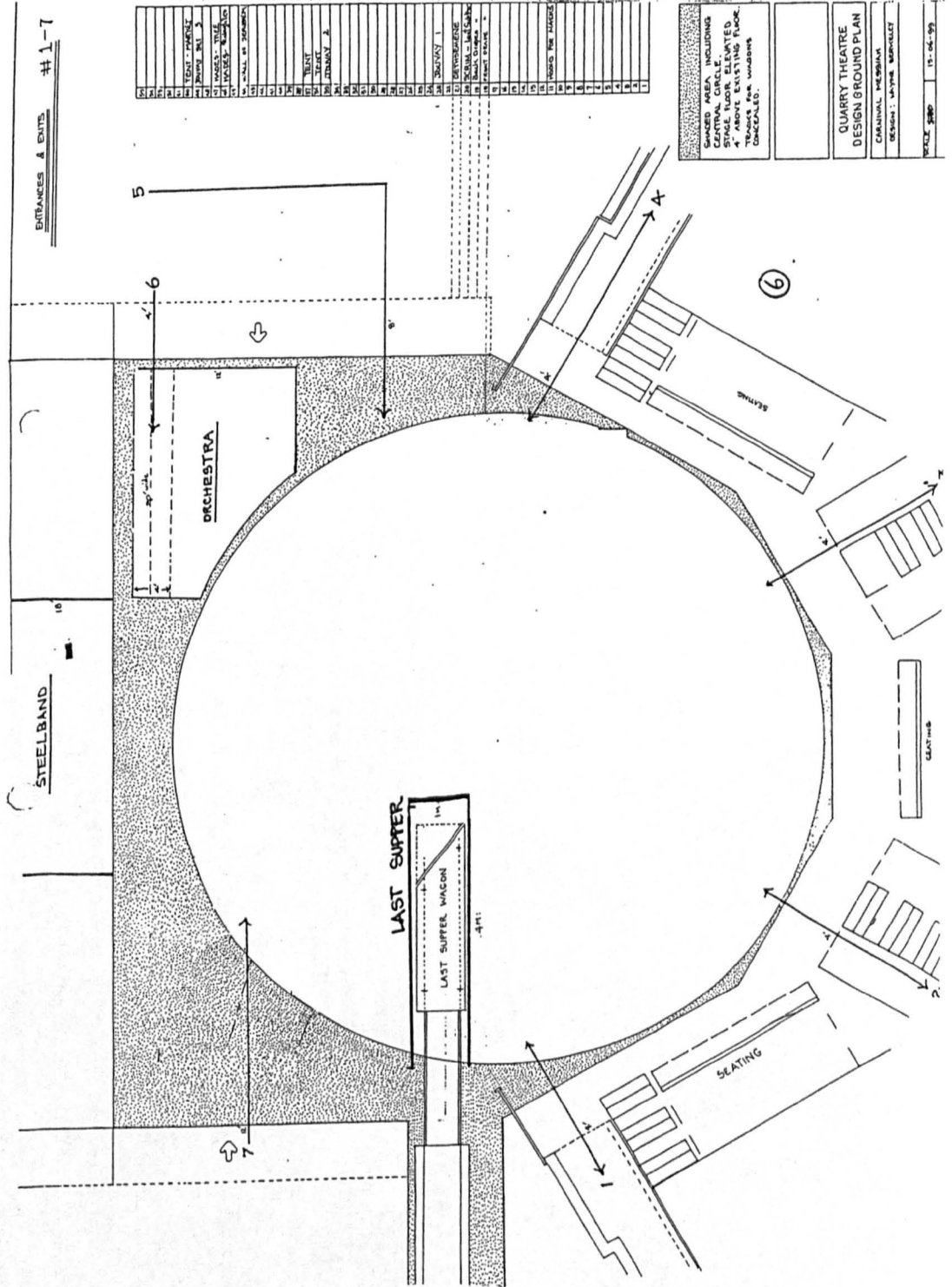
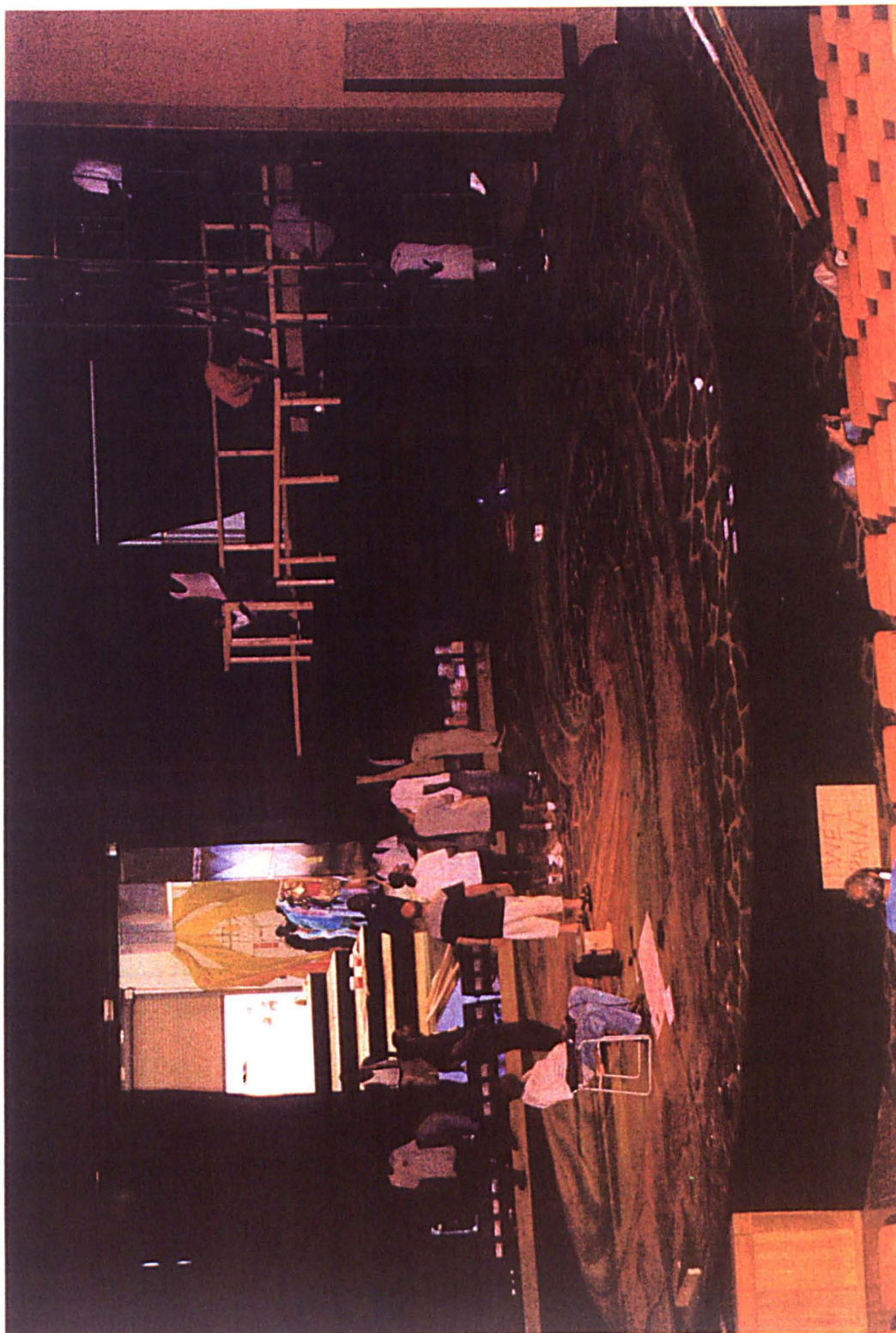




Figure 48: The Floor – The Technical plan



**Figure 49: Building the basic floor set in Queen's Hall**



**Figure 50: The Floor – the realisation**



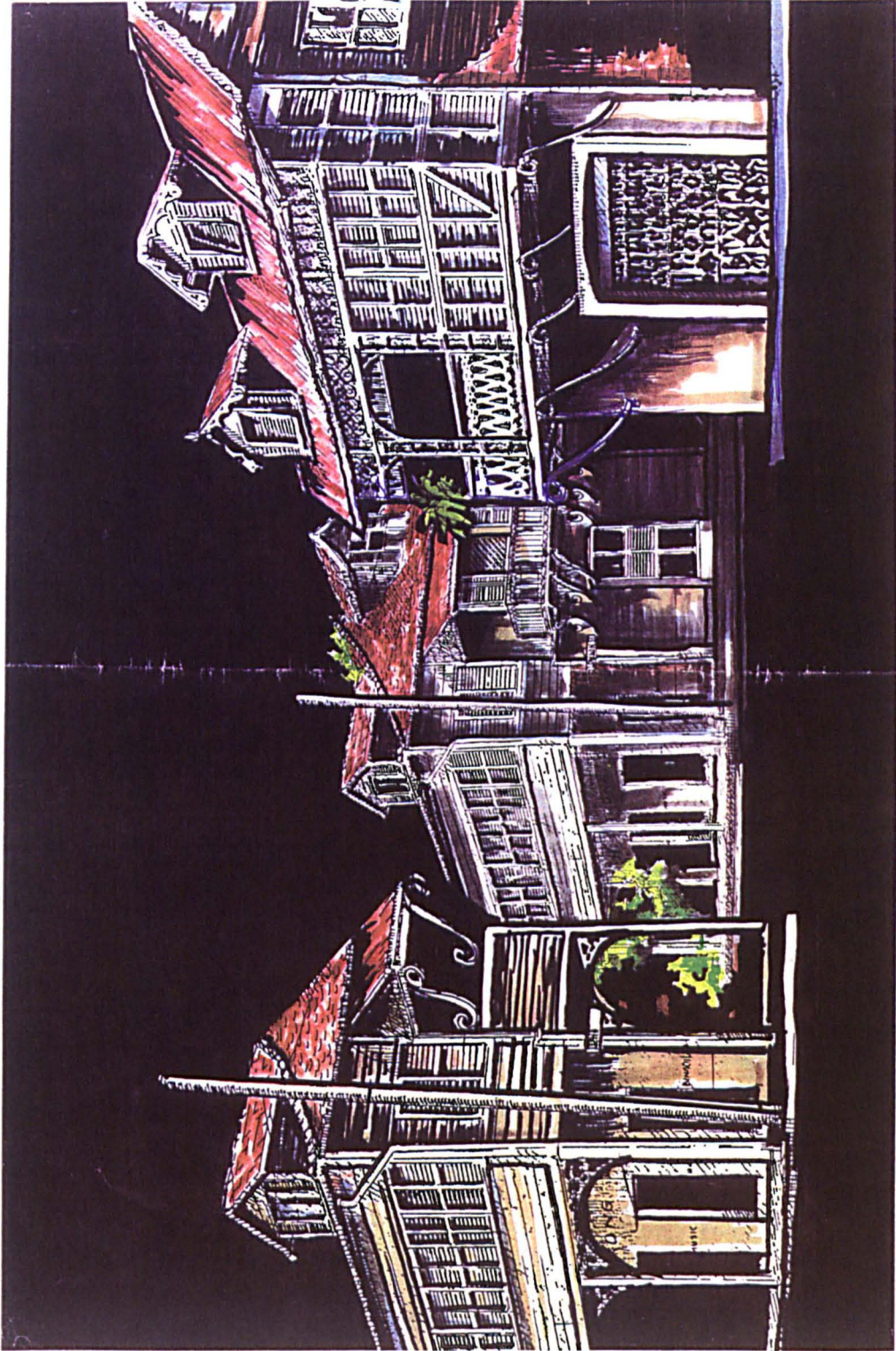
I asked Wayne Berkeley to make an overall comment on his the designs for Carnival Messiah. In the light of his recent and debilitating illness, instead of attempting to translate his remarks badly, I have taken the decision to publish the rest of his email correspondence in total as an introduction to each of his set designs.

“Overture.....Jouvay.....Green Corner”.

The Show opens with a sequence , that can only be understood By Trinidadians. This sets the whole mood of the performance . Jouvay , The break of day , The beginning of Carnival , Four O’Clock in the morning , a jubilant opening to the Carnival . I had to transform the setting into one where The Colour of the Costumes would be shown off to great advantage. The Set basically in Black and White was a great foil for the Multitude of Carnival Costumes to be seen against it. The set had to be Constructed in such a way that the actors came from different areas as if coming down a roadway to meet at a given point for the great festivity of Carnival.

The set comprised three large painted canvases , with large cut-Outs emphasizing doorways , verandas , and bushes hung at Various distances , to accentuate the various levels of perspective.....Dances include King Sailor....Dame Lorraines... Devils....Bele...Street Dance....

Figure 51; Green Corner – The Design



**Figure 52: Green Corner – The realisation**

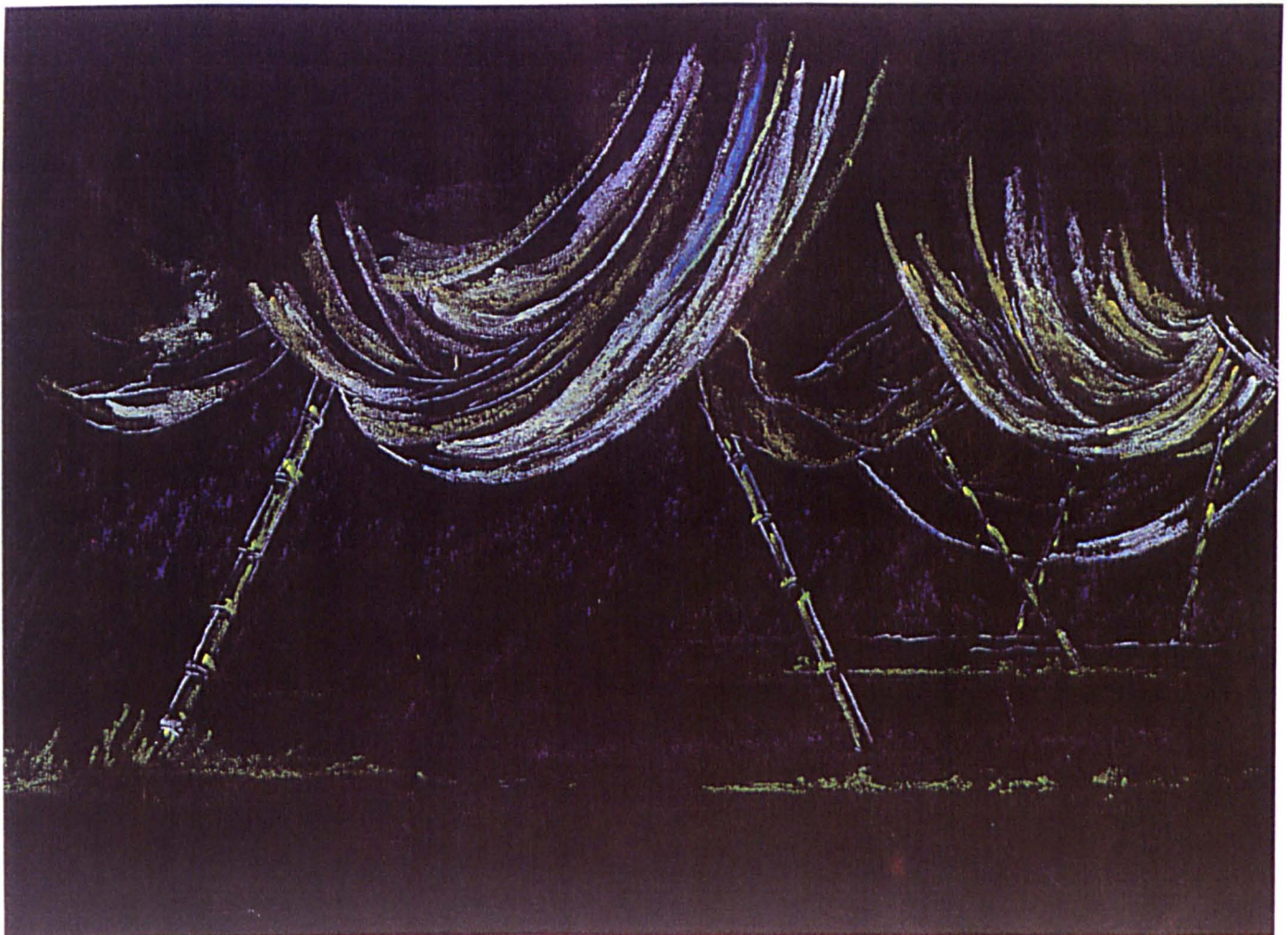


Act 1.....Scene 1..... Ritualistic Tent.....Shango

Shango is a Ritualistic form of worship , generally practiced by the Masses in Trinidad. Shango Abakoso is the namesake of the Shango Cult in Trinidad.

The Shango Ritual is performed basically in White , with Red as the accent Colour. It is performed in a White Tent , heavily draped With fringes and tassels and is normally supported with Bamboo poles. The cocoyea broom is significant with this form of worship , And is used to ward off the evil spirit. During the sacrifice , prayers are said , and the spirit seems to take hold of persons partaking in the worship. The Background is very Dark.

**Figure 53: Shango – The Design**



**Figure 54: Shango – The realisation**



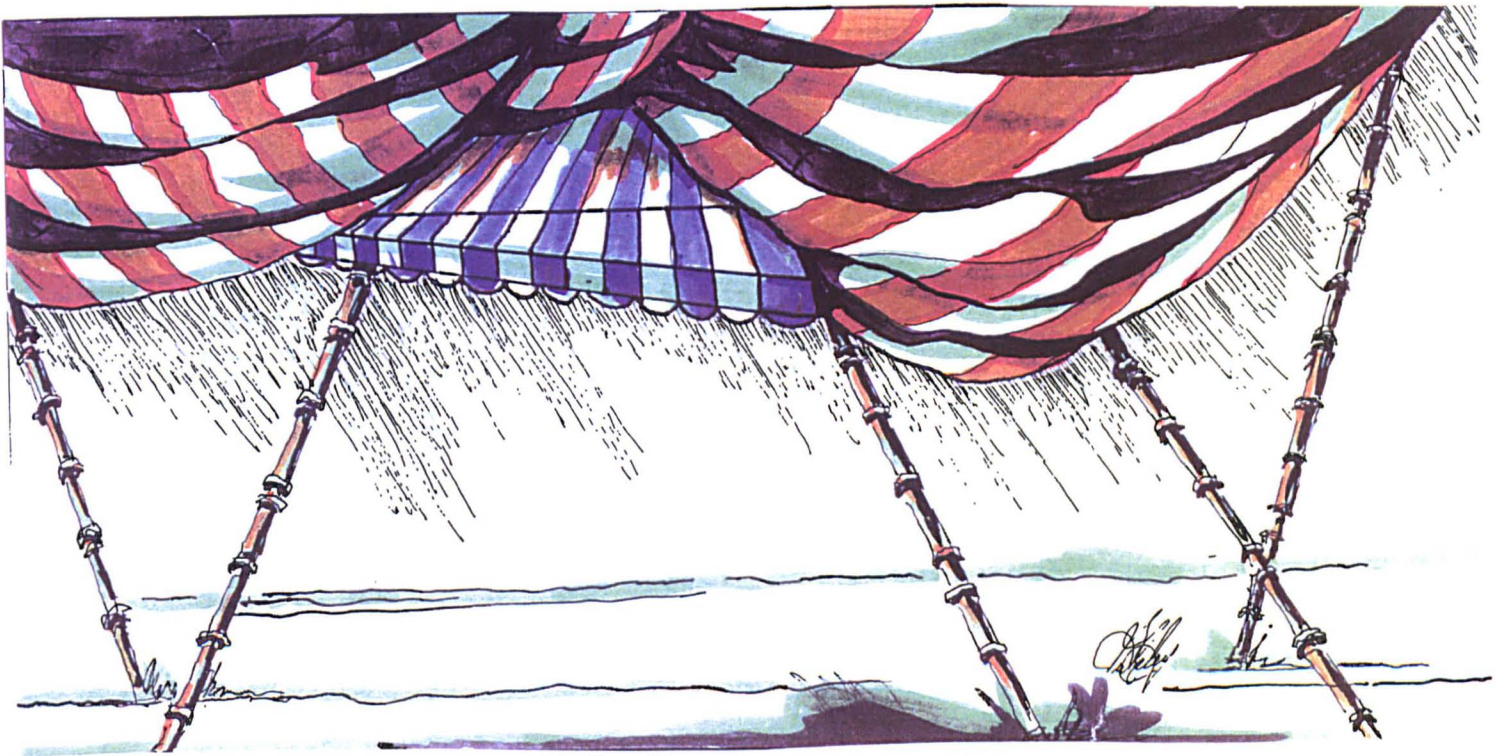


**Figure 55: Shango – An authentic ceremony**



For Unto Us A Child Is Born....Market Place...Jubilant...  
Scene set in a Market Place...This number is done with Great  
Jubilation. The Tent is Done is Large Stripes of Gold and Deep  
Red , and adds to the festive mood of the whole scene.  
Here The Child Jesus is shown for all to see, in the Market Place.  
There is much dancing and festivity .In the Distance is Seen the  
Mountains of Jerusalem.

**Figure 56: For Unto us – The original Design**



**Figure 57: For Unto Us – The Realisation**



**Figure 58: For Unto Us – The Realisation**



Hosanna.....Palm Sunday...Adoration of the King....Wall of Jerusalem....

This number has an East Indian feel to it. The dancers are accompanied to the rhythms of Tassa Drums, played by East Indian Drummers.

The Set here is very simple, it is the great wall of Jerusalem.

**Figure 59: Hosanna – The Wall of Jerusalem realisation**



The Last Supper ....Realistic....Gause Curtain....Table with Disciples...

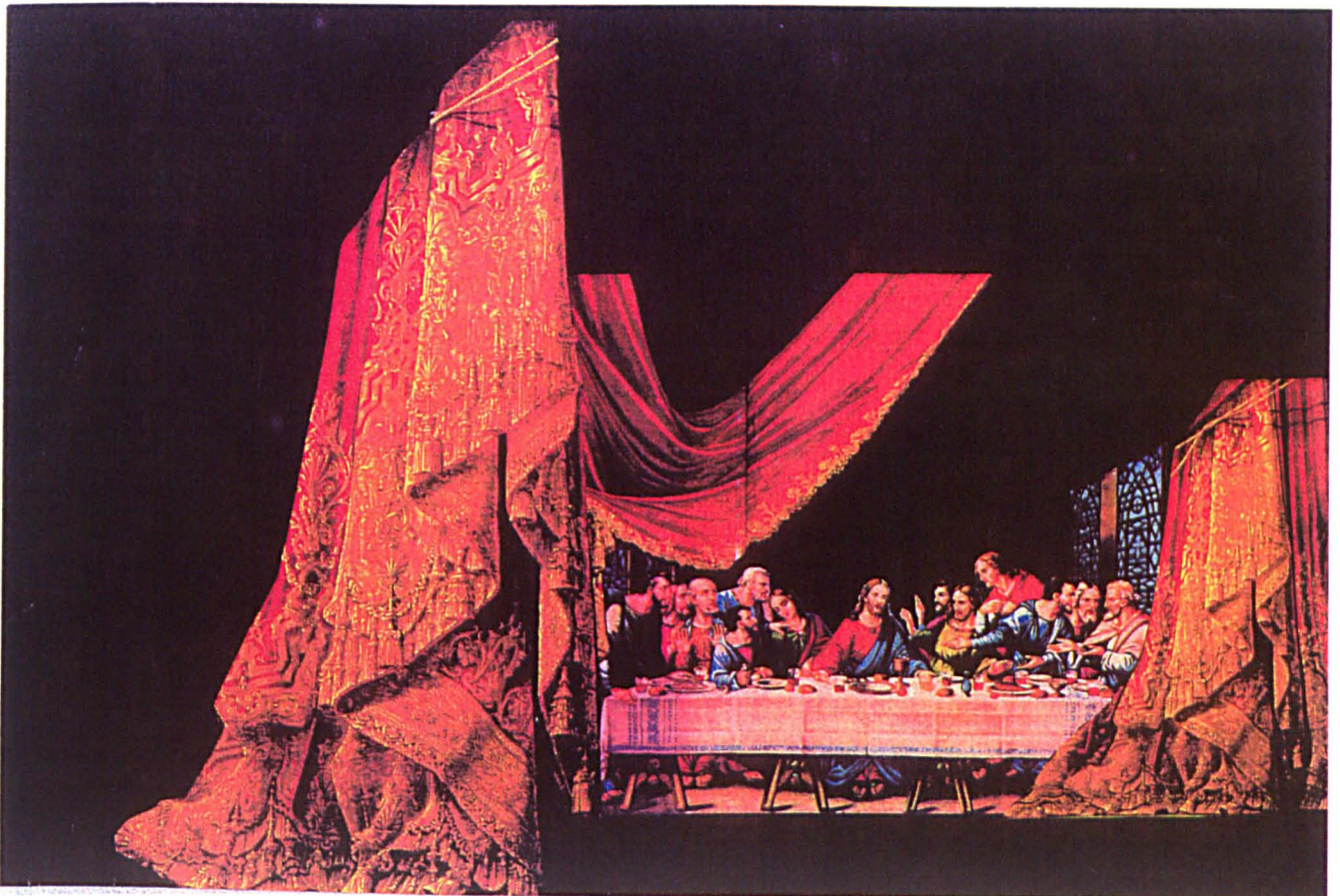
Painted Set of Last Super...

This Set was my Favourite. I thought that It was the most perfect Set .and could not be replaced by anything that was representational. It depicted what it was supposed to represent.

I did Leonardo Da Vinci's last supper in great detail.

The whole idea of doing it behind a Gause Curtain I thought most effective. The slow movements of the Cast, and the short length of time, added to the mystery of the whole scene.

**Figure 60:** The Last Supper – Leonardo Da Vinci



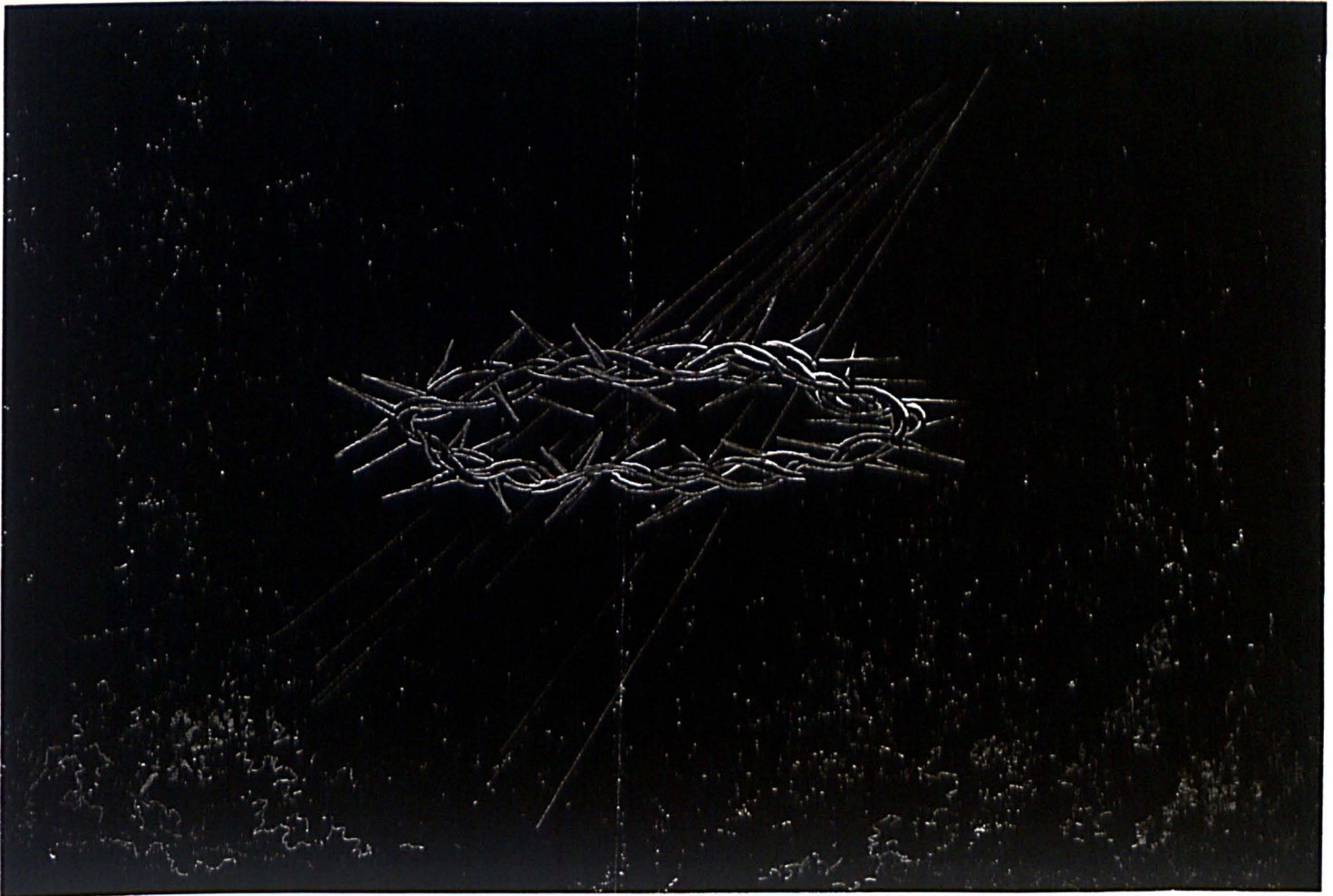
**Figure 61: The Last Supper – The making**



Act 11.....Getsemane....Crown of Thorns...Lone Disciple.  
Sleeping Disciples....Demons.

The Scene is rather somber, The lone disciple is seen singing  
'He was dispiseth' The others are sleeping and are awakened  
by the presence of Evil Figures. Who frighten them away.  
The set was rather incomplete, there was to be an enormous  
Crown of thorns suspended over the Whole Stage.  
A symbol of the impending doom of the Crucifixion.

**Figure 62; The Crown of Thorns - The unused Design**



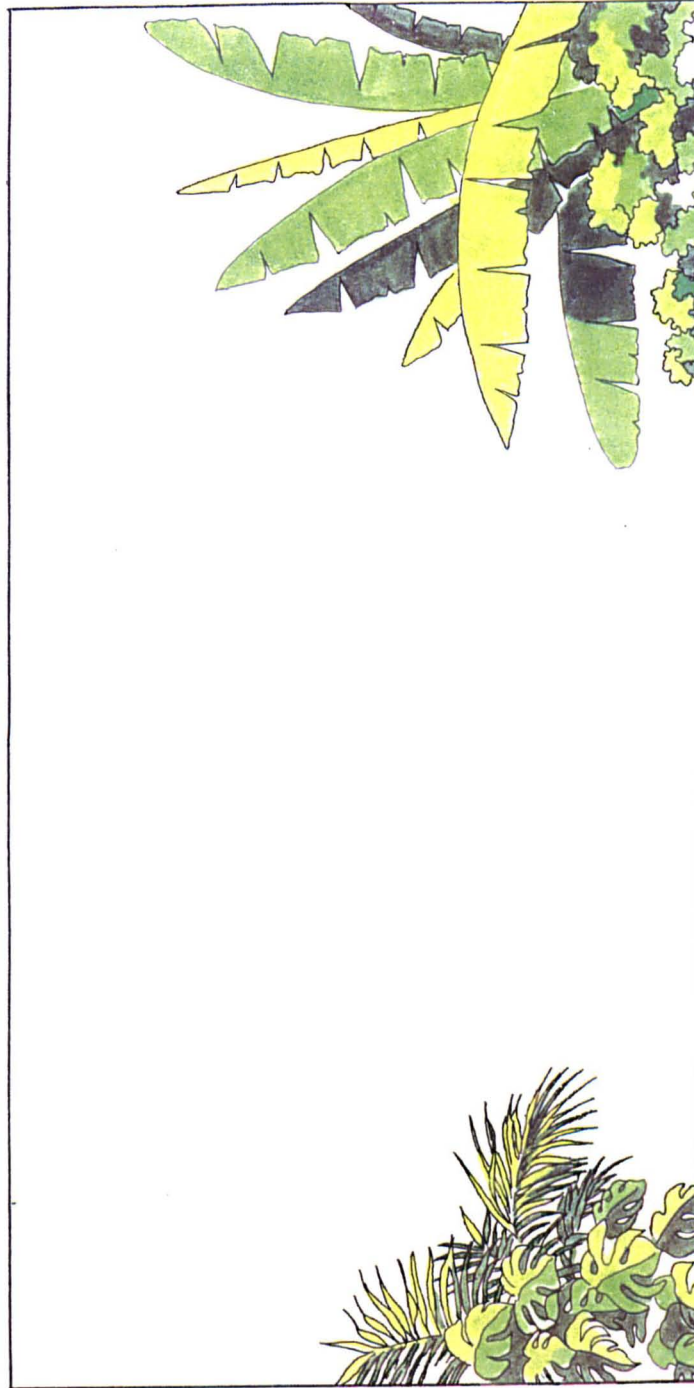


**Figure 63: The Garden of Gethsemene – The Design**



GETHESEMENE ..... BACKGROUND  
MOUNTAIN CAN BE SAME AS  
CRUCIFIXION.

Figure 64: the Garden of Gethsemene – The Design



GETHESEMENE .... FOREGROUND  
SET MOUNTED ON TAPER MESH ... BLACK  
MOTIFS CUT OUT OF SUEDETTE, AND  
APPLIED ON MESH.

Haedes.....Devil.....Tree.....Figures in Black....Lightening & Thunder.

**Figure 65- Haedes – The original unused Design**



**Figure 66: Haedes – The final design Design**



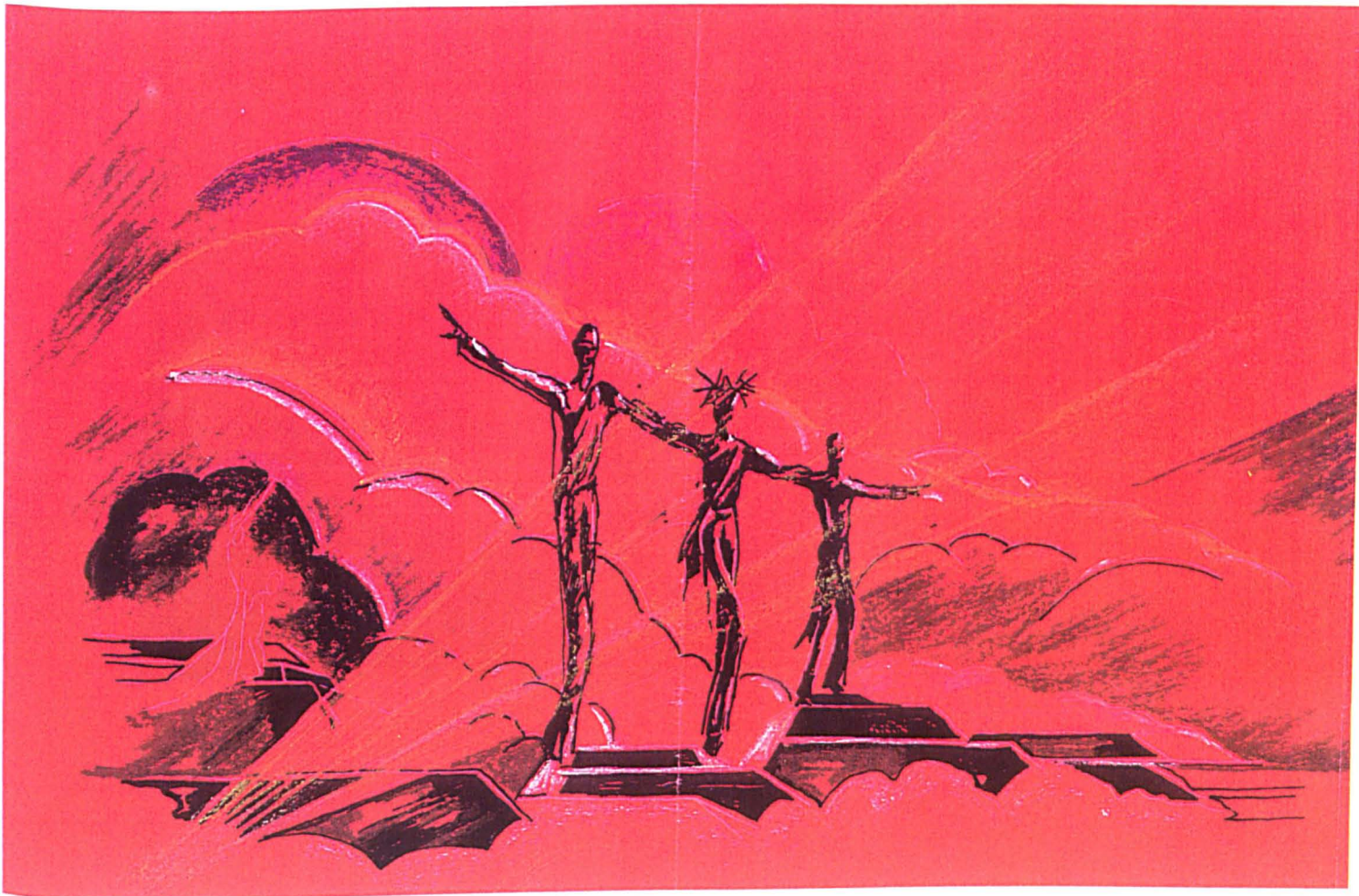
Crucifixion.....Completely Red.....Moko Jumbies....

The Crucifixion.

Christ and the two thieves are most noticeable, because they are elevated high above anyone else. They wear stilts. The scene completely lit in red , the colour of Blood .

There was a huge Gobo in lights which formed the clouds.

**Figure 67: The Crucifixion – The Design**

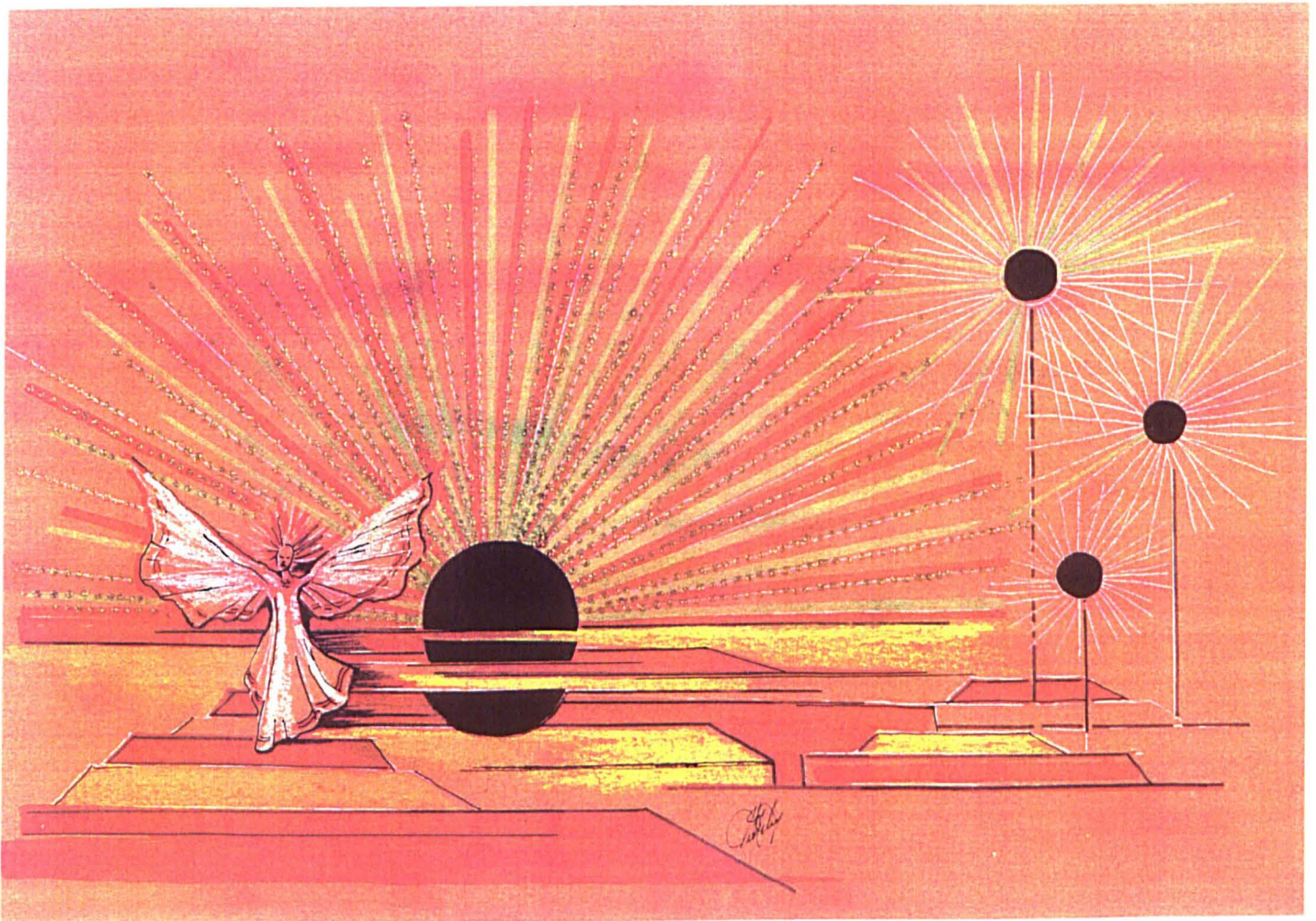


**Figure 68: The Crucifixion – The realisation**



The rest of the show was performed in Black Box and the masquerade costumes took on the role of set. A design was made for the RedeemeR scene which was never used or made.

**Figure 69: RedeemeR – The unused Design**



**I.3.ii COSTUME AND MASQUERADE DESIGN**

**Figure 70: Shango whites**



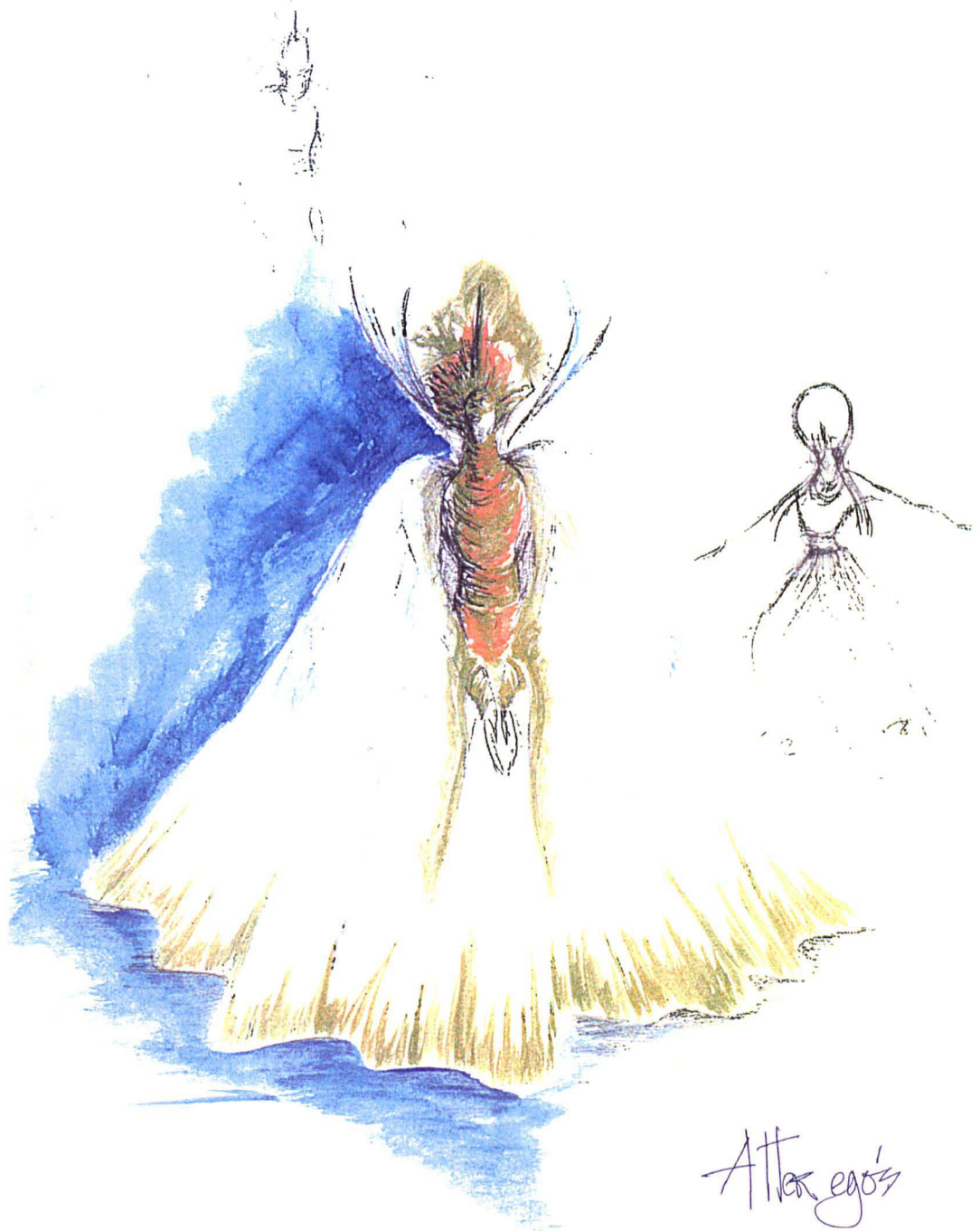


**Figure 71: Mama God – The Design**



*Mama God*

**Figure 72: The unused Alter ego design**



*Alter ego's*

**Figure 73:** The J'ouvert featuring the onlookers in mufti, the Dragon and Imps, the Midnight Robbers, the Flag Dancers, the Pierrot Grenade and the Pierrot



Figure 74: The Pierrot Grenade



**Figure 75: The French Pierrot**

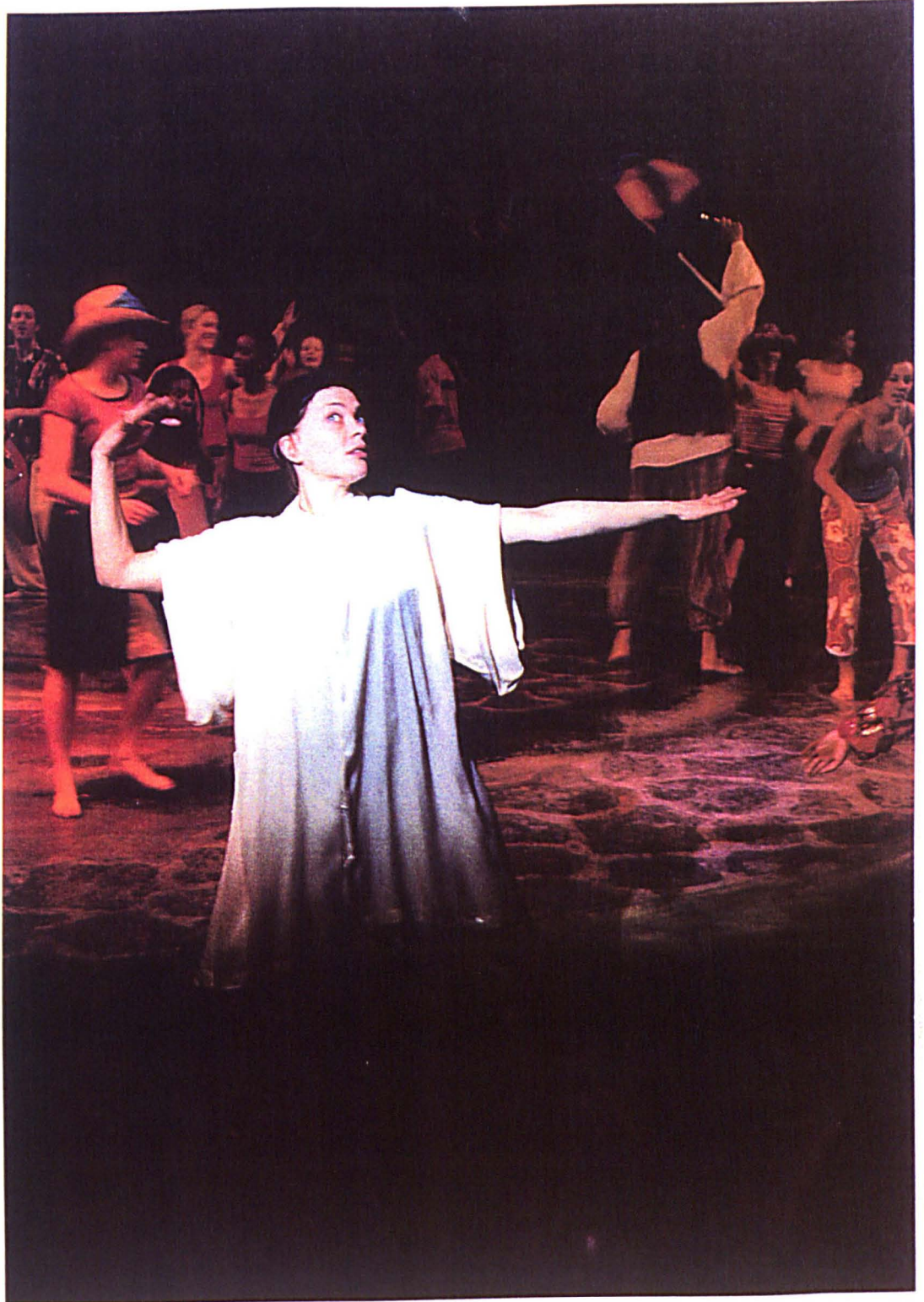
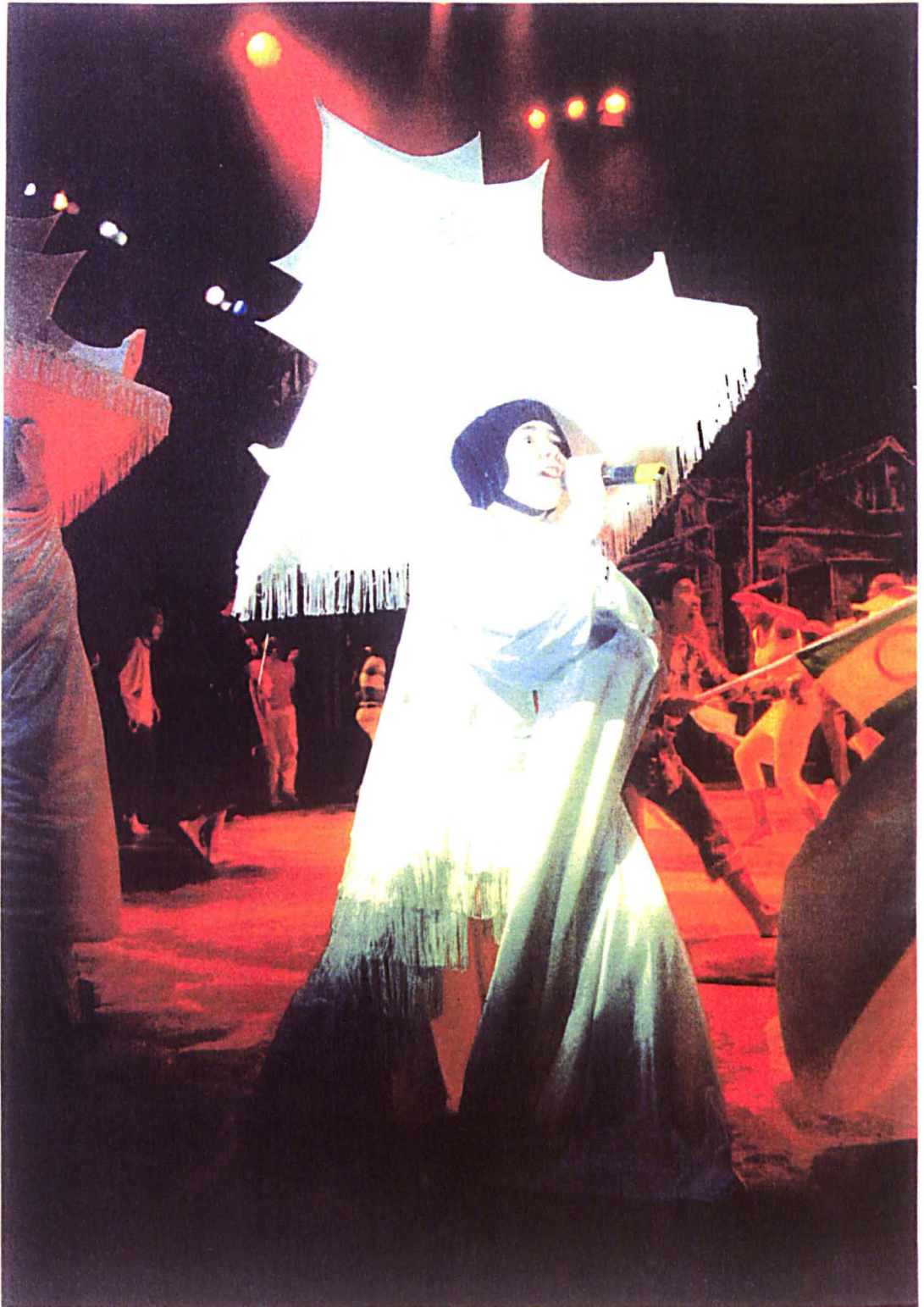


Figure 76: The Dragon and Imps



**Figure 77: A Midnight Robber**



**Figure 78: The Bele Dancers**





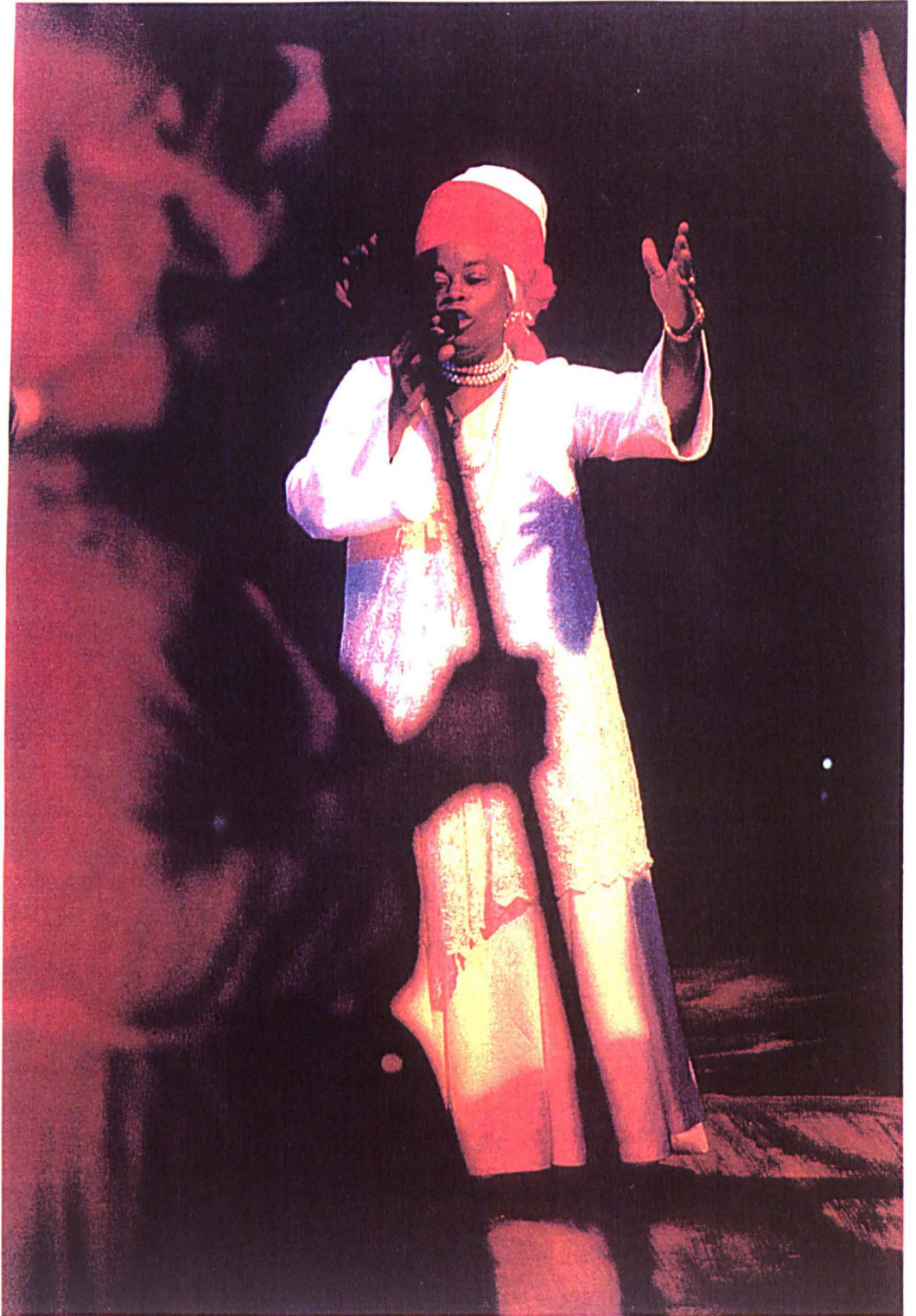
**Figure 79: Dame Lorraines**



**Figure 80: Spiritual Baptists**



**Figure 81:** The Oloran wearing the red of Shango



**Figure 82: More Shango whites**



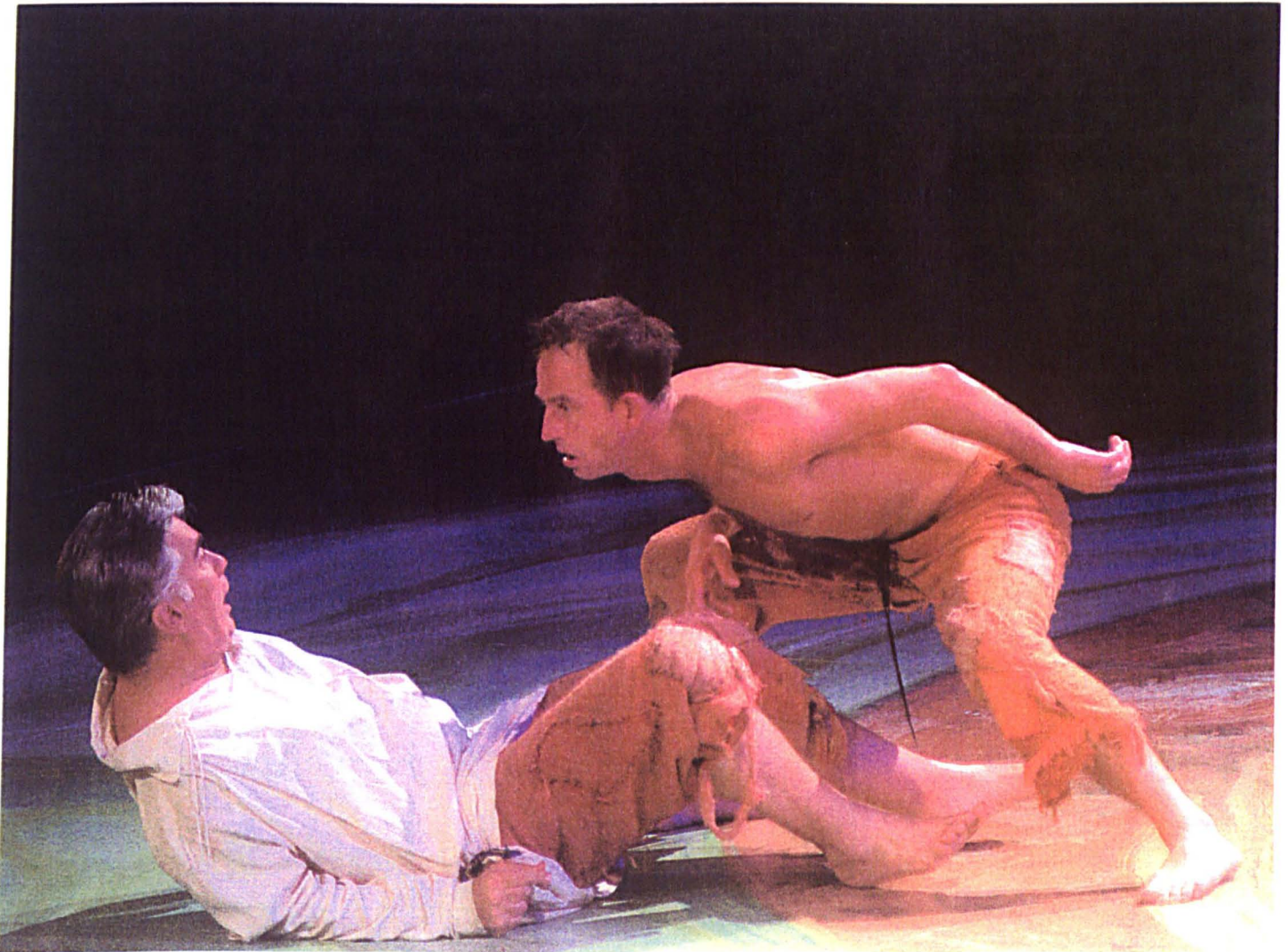
**Figure 83:** The original Minstrels/urban griots (1994/5)  
Designed by Nicholas Boiselle



**Figure 84:** More minstrels/urban griots



**Figure 85:** Jesus and the devil minstrels



**Figure 86: The Last Supper Sans Humanite minstrels**





**Figure 87: The Assumption minstrels**



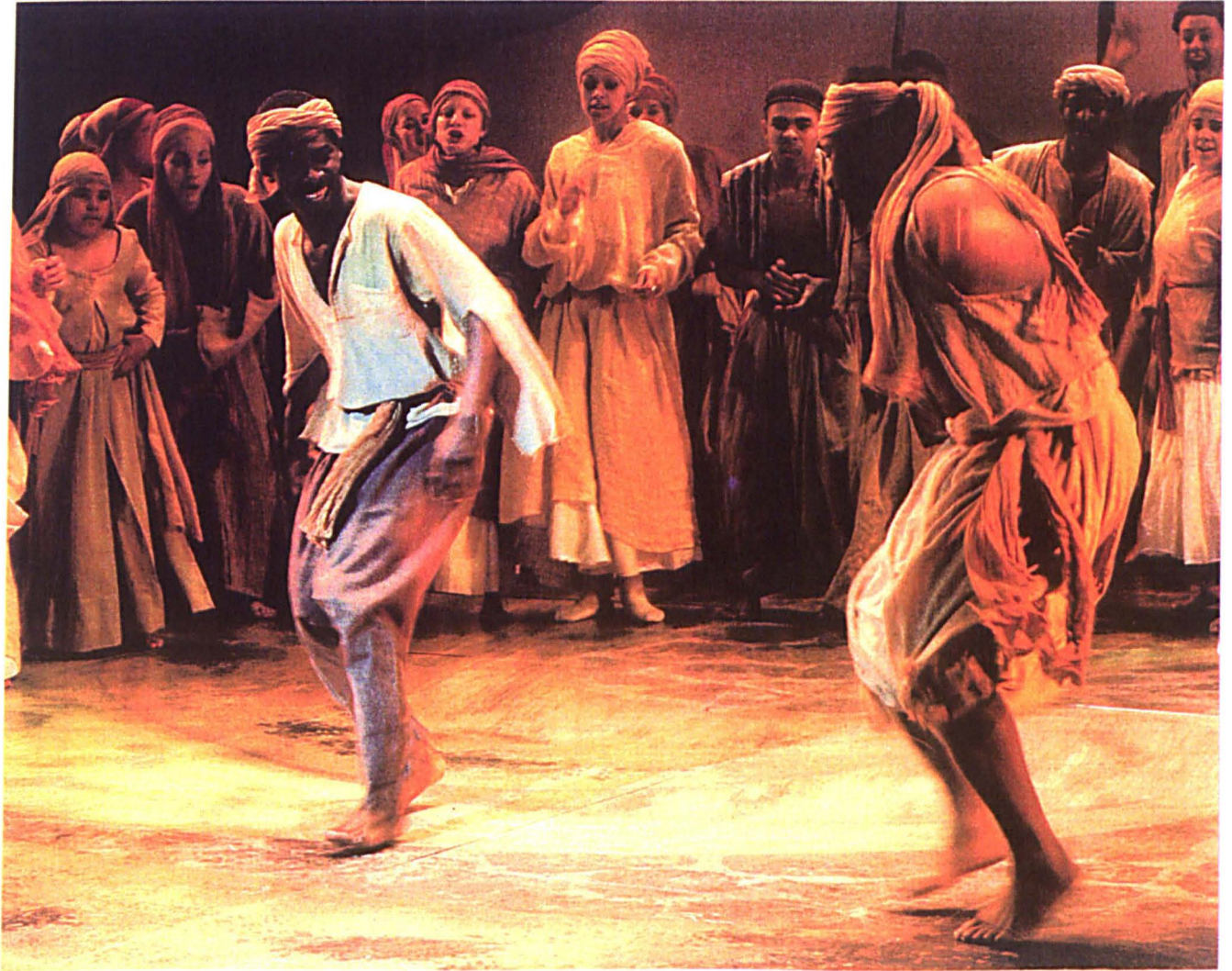
**Figure 88:** Jesus and Mary his mother minstrels



**Figure 89: The market Place, downtown Bethlehem**



**Figure 90:** Skanking in the m – place



**Figure 91: More Skanking in the m-place**



Figure 92: Hosanna – original design



**Figure 93:** The kathak dancer



**Figure 94; Mary singing Hosanna to the highest**





**Figure 95: Hosanna singers and dancers**



**Figure 96: More Hosanna singers and dancers**



**Figure 97: The Lone Disciple in the Garden of Gethsemane**



**Figure 98: The Underworld Creatures**



Figure 99: Eshu, The dark Angel, The Judas – The design



**Figure 100: Eshu, The Dark Angel, The Judas – The Realisation**



**Figure 101: Stations of the Cross**



**Figure 102: The Conflict and The Crucifixion**





**Figure 103: The Crucifixion and the Conflict**



**Figure 104: The Apostles**



**Figure 105: The Shields of Honour and The Flags of Freedom**



**Figure 106: A panoramic view of the Spiral of Freedom**



**Figure 107: The Evangelist and his two Gospel backing singers**



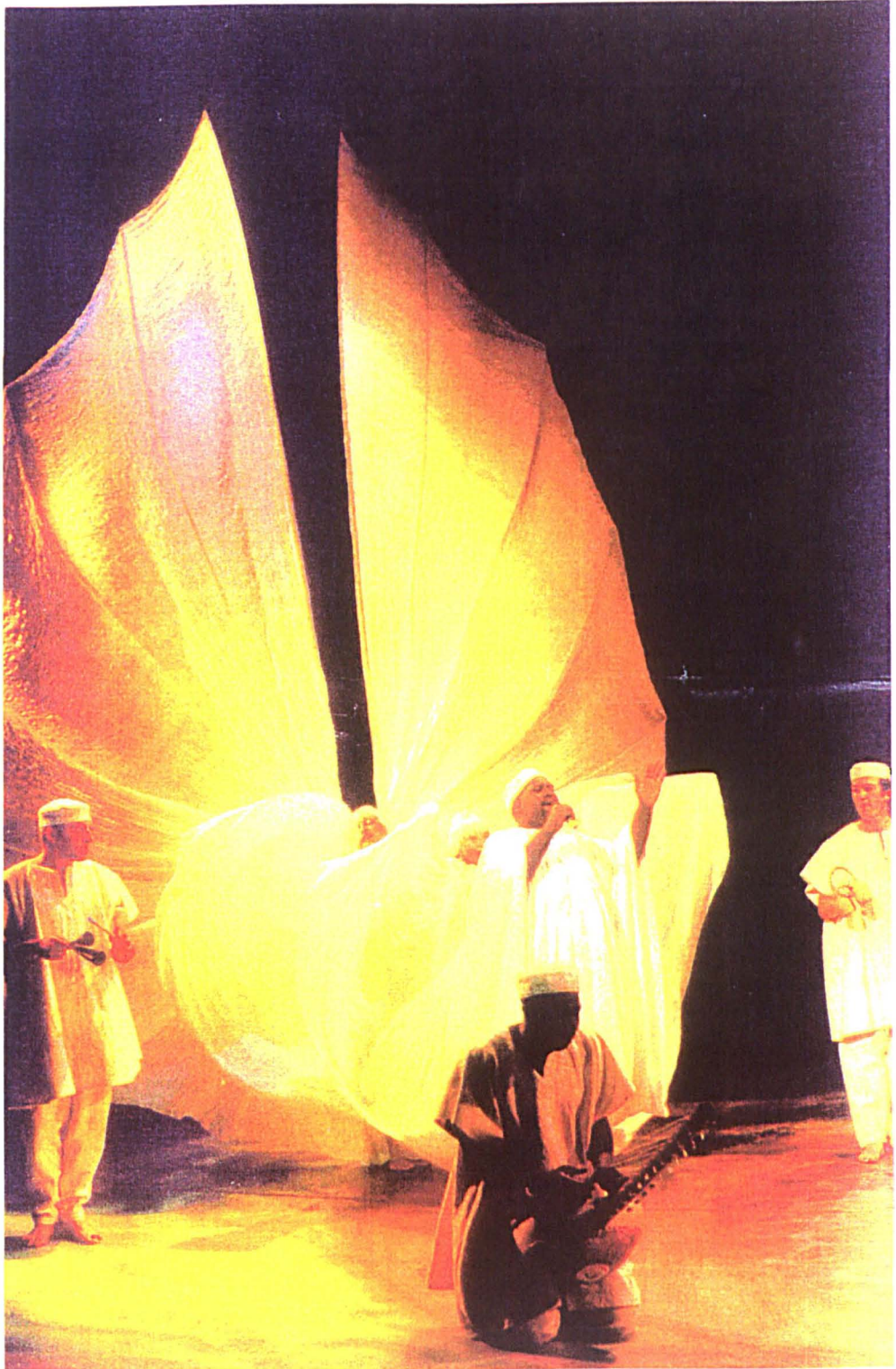
Figure 108: The Offstage Choir - Gown Design



**Figure 109: The Kora Player**



**Figure 110: The RedeemeR Ensemble**

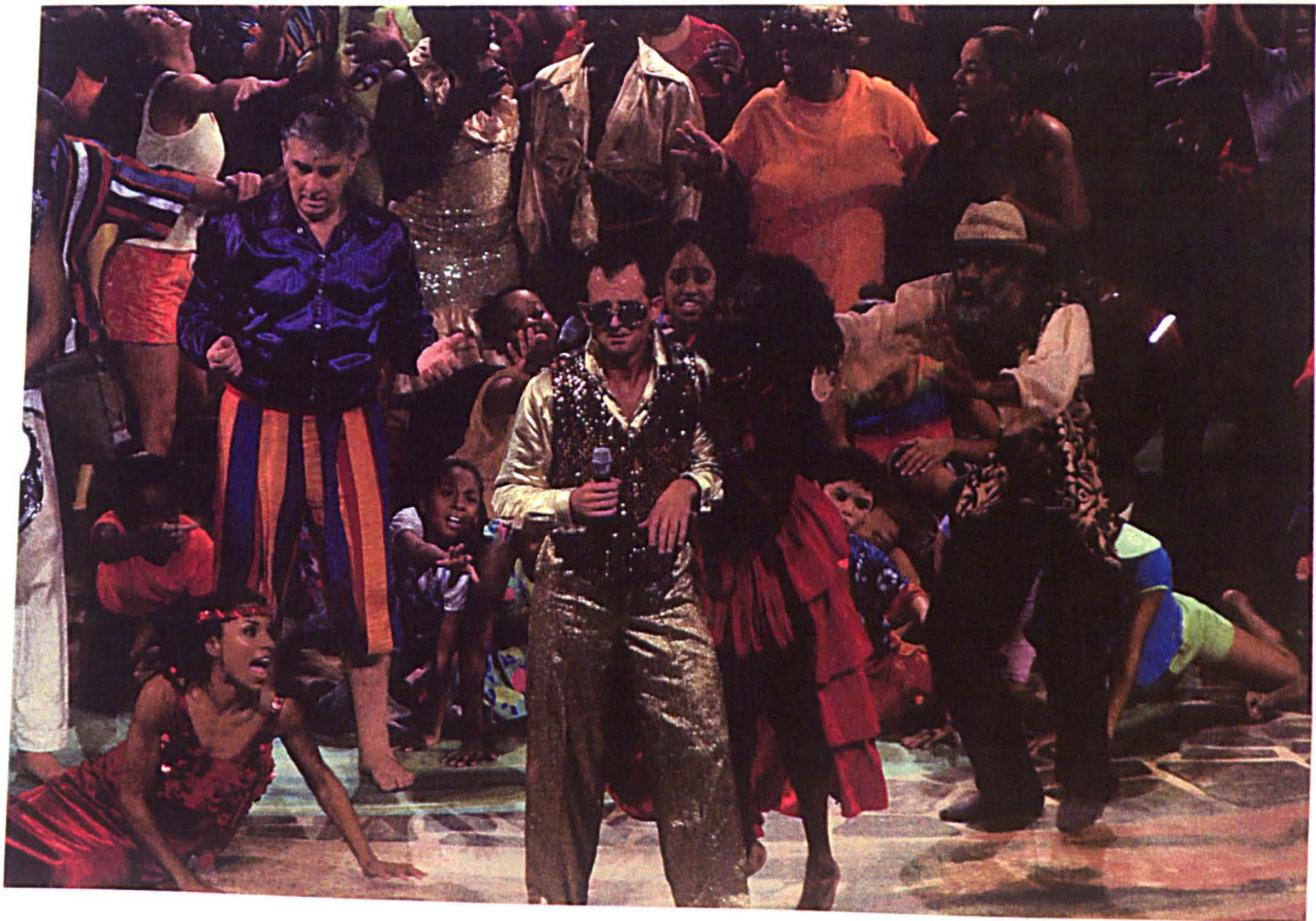




**Figure 111: The Dove of Peace, the Dovette and the Kora Player**



**Figure 112: The Whoopi Band – the Chorus and the minstrels**



**Figure 113: !HalleluliaH! singers and dancers – original design**



**Figure 114: 'HalleluliaH' singers and dancers**



**Figure 115: !HalleluliaH! singers and dancers**



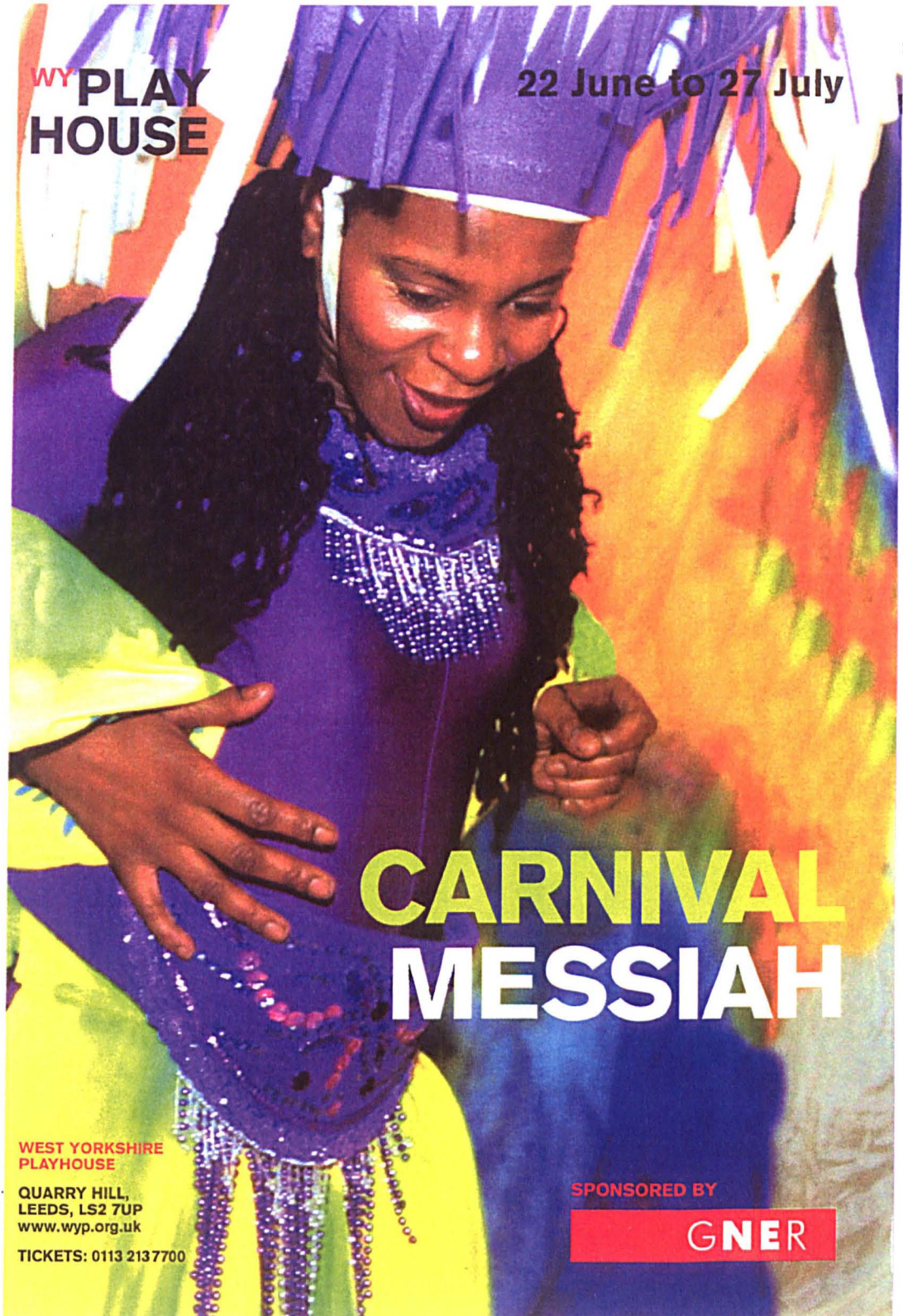
**Figure 116: 'HalleluliaH' singers and dancers**



**Figure 117: !HalleluliaH! singers and dancers**



Figure 118: 'HalleluiaH! singers and dancers



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**Figure 119: The headpiece design for the Carnival Messiah**



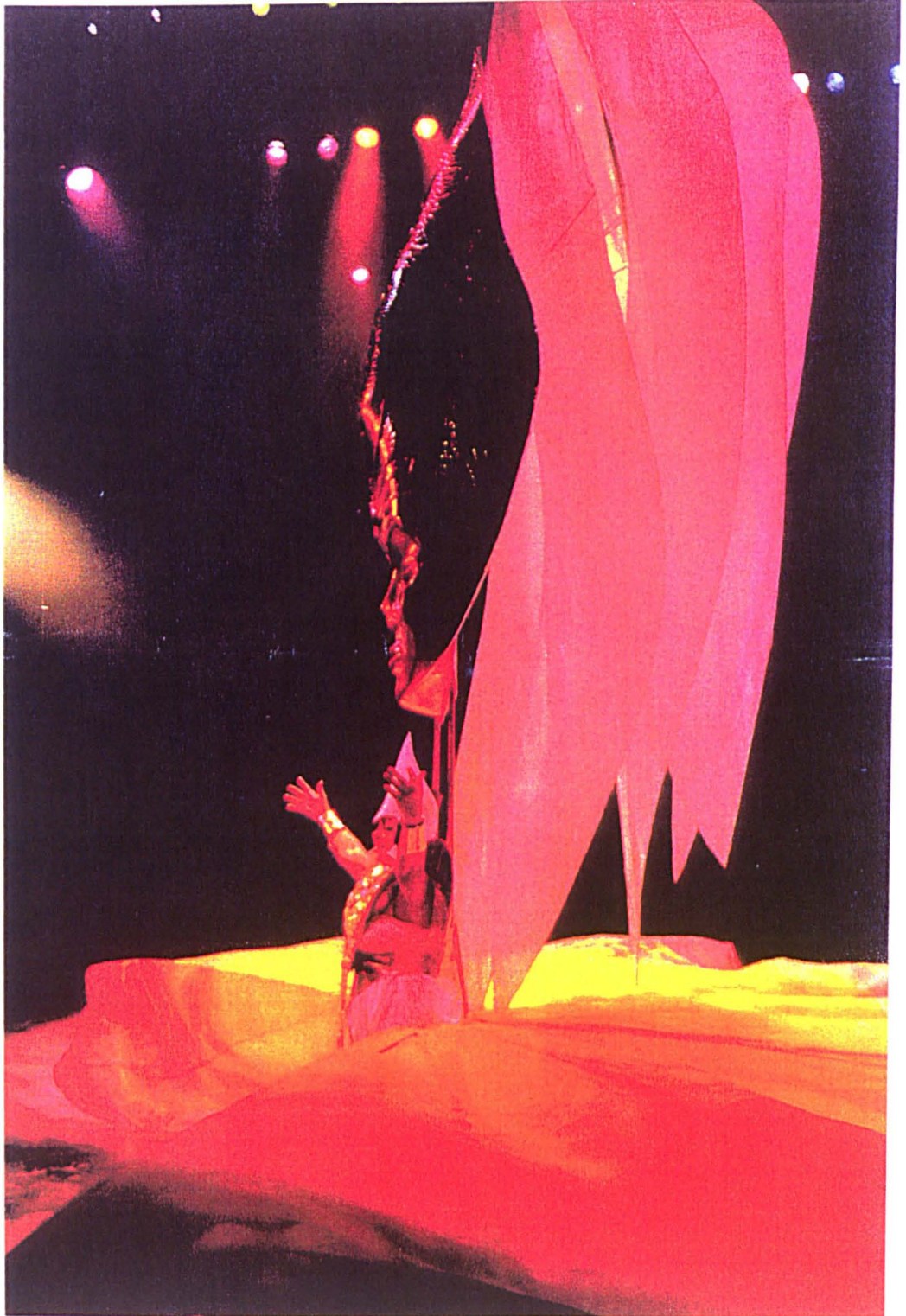
**Figure 120: First artistic impressions of the Carnival Messiah**



**Figure 121: Carnival Messiah – The realisation – closed**



**Figure 122: Carnival Messiah – The Ratafarian**



**Figure 123: Carnival Messiah on fire!**



**Figure 124a: Costumes backstage Queen's Hall**



**Figure 124 b: Making a Fancy Sailor headpiece with a Midnight Robber's head piece in the background**



## APPENDIX I.4

### THE AESTHETIC MATERIALS OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH

#### NOTES TO THE BOOK AND THE BOOK OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH

##### INTRODUCTION

Carnival Messiah creates, like the Caribbean itself, a paradoxical space - an ephemeral, intangible space - an arbeiter of "chaos", a *Third Space* that can only be intuited through the poetic and the performance. . The audience must have the illusion of experiencing a totality with apparently no repressions or contradictions - a fantasy space which displaces normal expectations and learned behaviour. Magical realism allows for boundary-skipping between worlds. The audience should have no other desire than that of maintaining themselves within the limits of these zones for the longest possible time, in free orbit, beyond imprisonment or liberty.

The structure of the drama of Carnival Messiah purposely does not unfold in a linear or chronological fashion. Neither does it adhere to the normal conventions of western theatrical dramatic practice. Like Carnival itself, it is unpredictable and often paradoxical. The main characters implicated in the universal Christian doctrine or narrative of the birth, life, death and



resurrection of Jesus Christ are played out by several different actors, singers, dancers and masqueraders throughout the duration of the production. My point being that everyone recognises the action and narrative, everyone knows this universal story, whether they adhere to its beliefs or not. Thus the actors become secondary to the message. I have allowed myself to exercise my creative imagination by 'playing' with, transgressing, interrogating and like Carnival itself, subverting the expected. I have allowed myself the indulgence of experimenting with many unspoken, undiscovered but dreamed of scenarios.

### **DESCRIPTION OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH**

Carnival Messiah is inspired by, and a radical reinvention of, Georg Freidrich Handel's oratorio 'Messiah'. Carnival Messiah is not an adaptation of Handel's oratorio Messiah. Created for large scale stage and theatre, Carnival Messiah features nine musical offerings from the Messiah Oratorio, using text taken from the St. James's version of the New Testament Bible. I have boldly re-arranged musically and combined this text with western European medieval popular theatrical genres and quite specifically Trinidadian traditional folk techniques, matching them alongside a multitude of Caribbean and contemporary popular indigenous music and dance genres,

all of which are showcased through the spectacular masquerade of Trinidad and Tobago. Any additional music has been composed by myself.

The production is organically grounded in two cherished but specifically culturally distanced musical traditions, those of Oratorio and Caribbean Carnival. Gordon Rohlehr correctly identifies my intention when he notes that "Carnival Messiah is the equation of different cultural forms and enactments: the seeking of congruence in apparently dissimilar shapes"(Rohlehr:2004:33). I have undertaken to combine in new and exciting ways, the visual, the live and performing arts of different cultures, by creating new celebratory performance environments and innovative methods of aesthetic juxtapositions and delivery.

A two-hour spectacular musical showcase, Carnival Messiah features a multitude of singers, musicians, masqueraders, dancers and actors - a minimum cast of some one hundred and twenty-five performers - with all the excitement, music and colour of Carnival, blended together with some of the most inspiring and exhilarating melodies from Handel's oratorio, Messiah. Gospel, oratorio, soca, rapso, reggae, tassa, hip hop, ritual theatre and masquerade combine with towering glittering carnival costumes and

dancing mobiles. Arrangements of Caribbean folk rhythms, Yoruba Oresha ritual, Islamic and Hindu cultural and musical references, the Carnival of Trinidad and the Liturgy of Christianity unite in unforgettable celebration. Music, Masquerade, pantomime, street theatre, commedia del 'arte and dance combine to tell the universal and compelling story of Christ's birth, death and resurrection.

### **CREATIVE STRATEGY**

In *Carnival Messiah*, I use the aesthetic mores of the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and Europe to explore and evoke cultural parallels, transformations and abrogations through various and often converse genres of artistic practice and expression. I do this by investigating, employing, playing with and shifting perspectives of historic, environmental and sociological worldviews to suit the needs and location of my discourse. I am recovering and exhaulting in the history of my people, using my own language, and presenting these on my own terms. By superimposing traditional western European musical and theatrical devices on those of traditional Trinidad Carnival practice, *Carnival Messiah* combines the visual, live and performing arts in new, unique and exciting ways.

As a result of the interlaced patterns of migration, mission activity and the resilience of the African, Islam and Hindu religious practices, 21<sup>st</sup> century Trinidad and Tobago exhibits a constellation of religions as well as a kaleidoscope of cultures, the influence of which, I have been privy to all my life. Carnival Messiah suggests by its very name and nature, the employment of subversive strategies, which often use religion as a site of oppositional meaning. Artistically, the production has evolved on three levels, one that is sacred and spiritual, one that makes cultural commentary and one that is purely aesthetic. I explore spiritual consciousness by examining the parallels that exist between worship in all the religious practices. Parallels such as those within Christian theology, specifically the Roman Catholic religion and the Oresha traditional Yoruba cult/religion/ritual. Middle Eastern and Asian theology and aspects of Trinidadian cultural and Carnival practices.

With the exception of the addition of a libation or blessing at the beginning of the show, the production's structure is based on a western operatic format, which consists of, a libation or blessing, an Overture, Act I, Act II, Act III and an Epilogue. Act I is characterised by a Traditional and Folk aesthetic, Act II is characterised by what I refer to as Carnival Fantastique which as the description suggests is where my Carnival imagination is allowed to express

itself completely. Act III is characterised by Contemporary rendition and aesthetic expression. The Epilogue concludes the artistic proceedings.

The foundational framework of Carnival Messiah is built around the 'Three Mysteries of Devotion' as ascribed to the life of Jesus Christ in the Roman Catholic liturgy, these being, 'The Joyful' (Act I), 'The Sorrowful' (Act II), and 'The Glorious' (Act III) mysteries. They are aligned in parallel with the Yoruba (and Christian) cycle of life, 'Birth', 'Death' and 'Rebirth', which in turn reflect the three key stages (acts) of Trinidad Carnival, 'Dimanche Gras', (Big Sunday) 'Lundi Gras' (Carnival Monday) and 'Mardi Gras' (Carnival Tuesday) with 'J'ouvert' being utilized appropriately in my opinion, as the 'Overture' within the Prologue. Finally, the !HalleluiaH! is the Epilogue, which fulfills the role of 'Las Lap' or the finale.

I have employed a musical technique, that of polyphony - an interlacing of strands or solo 'voices' of music, each having independent melodic lines, which, when they come together create harmony - to deliver and develop the overall theatrical concept of Carnival Messiah. These dramatic 'voices' or dimensions are represented variously in and by song, dance, masquerade and narrative. Thus, as the story unfolds in these four dimensions, they are able to operate singularly as well as in varying

combinations. These dramatic 'voices' include the dimension and interpretation of the masses, through song and dance. These are 'the people of the world', a vast chorus-cast of poly-ethnic assemblage. These 'people of the world' theatrically present the litanic African derived call and response genre through their enactment of the story in their response to, and support of, the various characters and incidents that take place within the narrative - a Caribbean as opposed to a Greek chorus. Their commentary oversees all action of the show and their vehicle conveys by all the major chorus's of the show - the J'ouvert/Overture, the Downtown Bethlehem Market scene - For Unto us a Child is Born, Palm Sunday and the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem - Hosanna, Eshu's underworld - the Crucifixion Adagio, taking the gospel to the world - How Beautiful are the Feet of Them that Preach the Gospel of Jesus, the Whoopi Band and !Halleluliah! - as well as all the dramatic ensembles such as the last Supper, Mama God and her alter egos etc.

The second polyphonic 'voice' or dimension are the renditions and interpretations of the 'Minstrels' or 'Urban Griots' who are charged with the responsibility of actually 'telling' the story through the use of narrative and physical theatre techniques. The third polyphonic 'voice' or dimension is the

actual voice of several characters within the story - ' Mother Earth, Mama God and her alter egos, Mary, Joseph, Joseph's brother, the Ragga storytellers, the twelve disciples, the Lone Disciple, the Dark Angel, Pontius Pilate, Jesus, the two thieves, the Apostles, the Evangelist, the Dove of Peace, the Dove's attendant, the Voice of Truth and the Carnival Messiah. And finally the fourth polyphonic 'voice' or dimension includes all the Steelbands' as well as all the musical accompaniment, and instrumental work used throughout the show.

Some of the performative juxtapositions I have employed in Carnival Messiah include unusual cultural and aesthetic combinations for example, in 'How beautiful are the feet', the style and rhetoric of the black American evangelical church preacher character is super-imposed on a Caribbean calypso folk style three part vocal chorus, this, as a vehicle to broadcast the 'gospel' to the world. I have combined the syncretism of the Shango (traditional Yoruba religion) ritual with the Roman Catholic liturgy relating to the Nativity. In Shango Aye. Mother Earth leads the devotional chanting to Shango - Oreisha deity of Thunder and Lightening - while also singing in tandem, Handel's aria, 'but who may abide the day of his coming' underpinned by a simple repetitive two part choral Oresha chant response.

Here I have theatrically and musically, allied the concept of the Immaculate Conception of the Christian liturgy with that of the African ritual of Possession, in a bid to understand and explore that phenomenon myself. In RedeemeR, using mostly Handel's original melody, I combine vocally the Christian liturgy of "I know my Redeemer liveth" with the drum rhythms of West Africa and the kora string sound of 12<sup>th</sup> century Islam.

The dance forms that have emerged from the negative forces of Caribbean History have created a rich and thematic significance for dance in Carnival Messiah. This is characterised by a diverse vocabulary featuring very obvious influences of African, Asian and European cultural elements that are then contained and underpinned by an overall African sensibility. These diversified dance registers which are more than just a revitalisation of an African past became part of a process of a continual translation and accomodation of African and other cultural legacies creating new features and genres which were indigenised, then expanded metaphorically into the artistic masquerade forms of Trinidad and Tobago. Carnival Messiah in fact highlights how important dance is as an indicator and retainer of the diversity of cultures, particularly those available in Trinidad and Tobago, e.g. the Shango – a Yoruba derived religious syncretic enactment and the



Phagwa (Hosanna) – based on the Hindu festival of Holi and especially in the J'ouvert Overture. Dance here, is not peripheral, it is the central vehicle of all the traditional and contemporary enactments of Carnival Messiah.

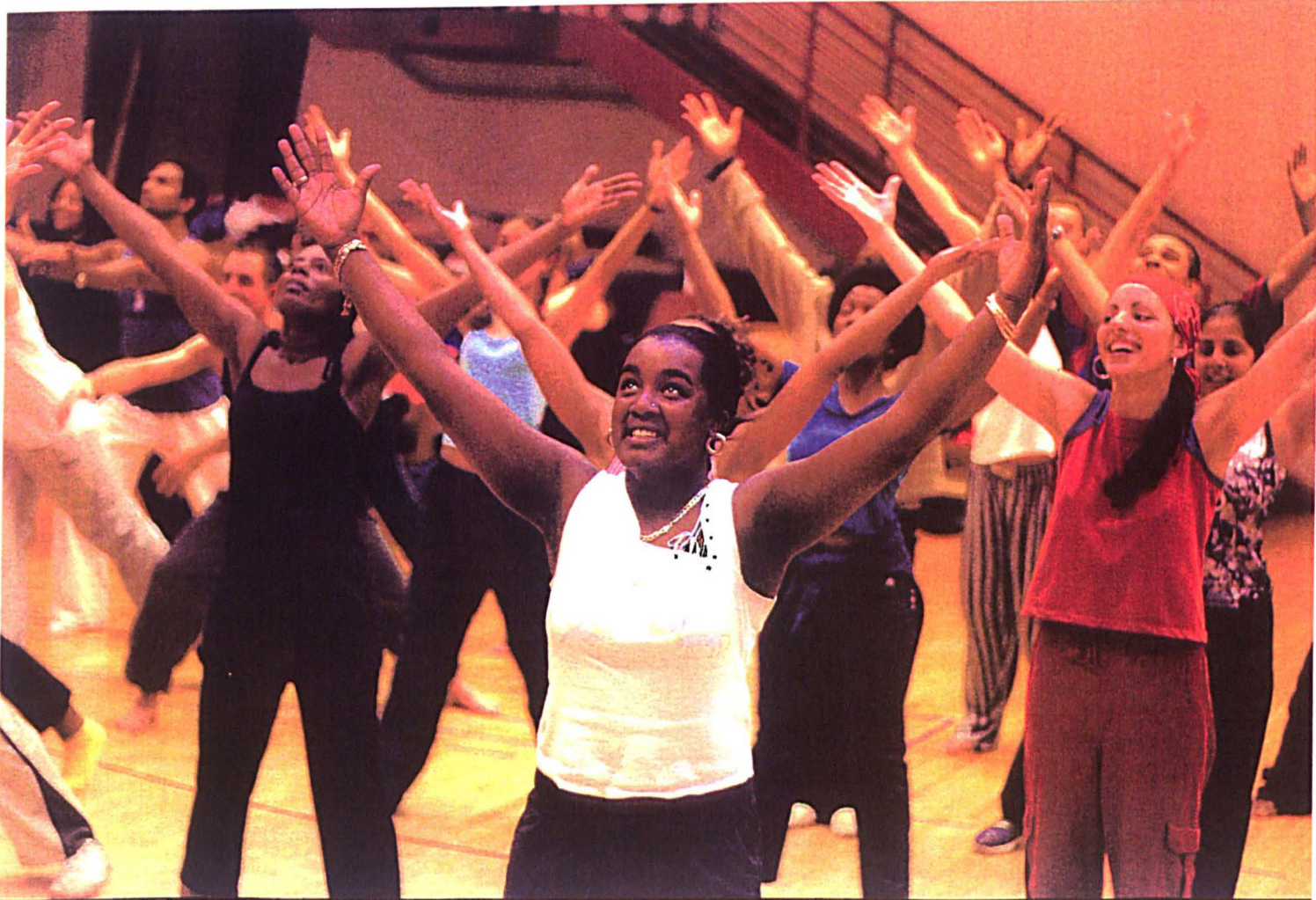
## CASTING AND RECRUITMENT

A number of cast members were chosen not only for their acting, singing and/or dancing abilities, but more so for the fact that some of the key characterisations in the production were an actual embodiment of the roles they were asked to play - they were in fact, the authentic item, eg Ella Andall as Shango Priestess – Ella is a practising Oresha high priestess in Trinidad and Tobago. Ralph Dyette as King Sailor, is the last of a generation of genuine Fancy King Sailor characters. Brian Honore as traditional *Midnight Robber* is one of the few genuine practising Midnight Robbers who continue to come out on the street during Carnival. Alyson Brown as large scale costume masquerader and dancer is the foremost practitioner of this genre in Trinidad and Tobago and by extension, in the world, today. I was also able to locate two of the foremost contemporary *Ole Mas* players - Bunny Dieffenthaler and John Cumberbatch to create an authentic portrayal of this genre.

**Figure 125: Yorkshire rehearsals 2002 - Kirsty Almeida**



**Figure 126: Yorkshire rehearsals 2002 –Chantelle Davis**



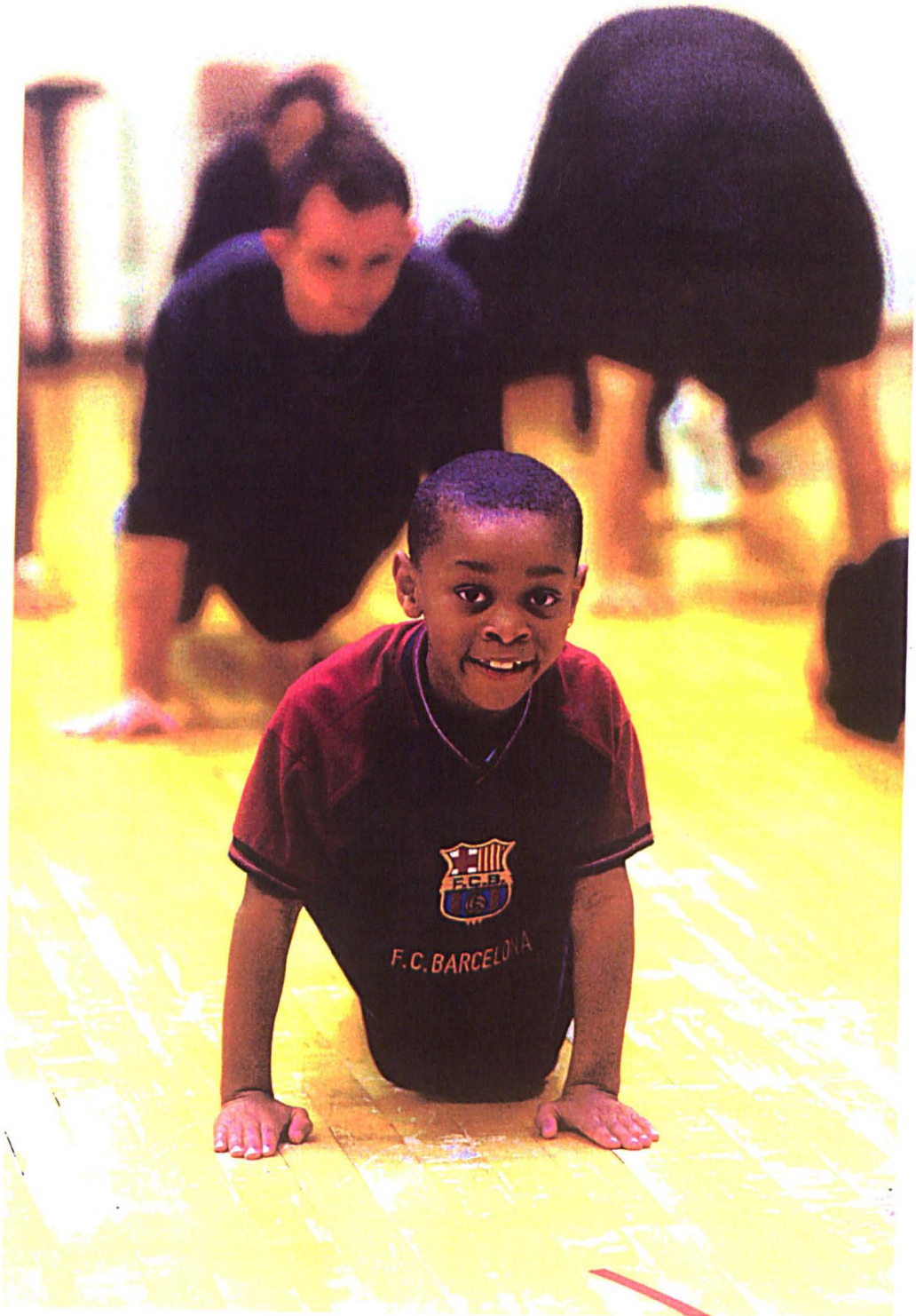
**Figure 127: Yorkshire rehearsals 2002 – Leoni Avenant**



**Figure 128: Yorkshire rehearsals – Jo Jo Moorhouse**



**Figure 129: Carnival Messiah's youngest cast member - Lorenzo**



**Figure 130: The Minstrels/urban griots 2002, from left to right Nigel Wong, Benedicta Seierup, Kerry Frampton, Ram John Holder, Jem Dobbs, Ben Fox, Glenda Thomas.**

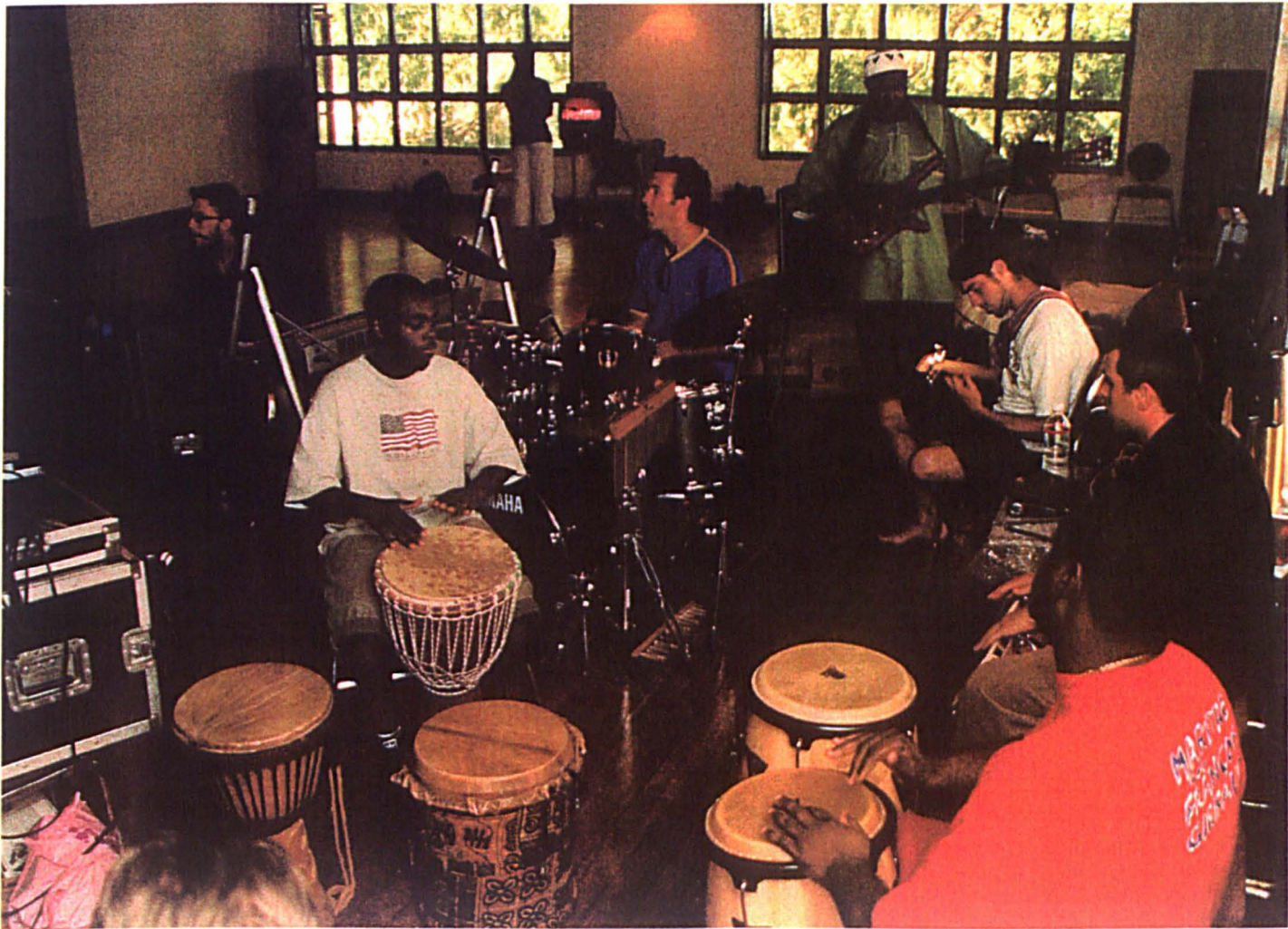


Additionally, at least one third of the company were cast because of their unusual and unconventional body shapes, this strategy was used to enhance the overall visual impact of the production, as well as to replicate the 'real' world. This model was then extended to using people in ensemble who consciously displayed differences in levels of ability and technique with a view to creating a more organic, holistic, raw and natural end product. The use of these strategies to cast the production effectively combined the real with the imagined, the authentic with the illusion and it created the difference between experiencing the 'real thing' as opposed to seeing the actor who would have had to learn to portray the part.

The African musician is primarily concerned with the art of playing an instrument and not necessarily with the technique. Technique is an intermediary stage, and once the musician has mastered the rudiments of his/her instrument, he/she will pay very little attention to it. This attitude to instrumental musicianship is often reflected in western popular music in musicians who are often not formerly trained, but self-taught. However, this absence of technique – in the Western sense of the term – does not to my mind, imply a corresponding absence of artistry but conversely, goes towards explaining why the same instrument is often played in a multitude



**Figure 131: Musicians in rehearsal in Trinidad and Tobago**



**Figure 132: The Tassa Drummers in Hosanna**



of different ways and why the musician's improvisational and interpretative skills become such a key element to the overall outcome of a performance.

The musicians and singers in *Carnival Messiah* were quite specifically employed for their skills and qualities of improvisation. Like the text of *Carnival Messiah*, its score cannot be read in isolation. Very specific 'insider' knowledge, basic formulae manipulative skills and execution related to the successful execution of various Caribbean and African music genres are required to deliver a satisfactory end product.

### **PRODUCTION HISTORY OF CARNIVAL MESSIAH**

*Carnival Messiah* was first presented for one night, as a student production, at the Wakefield Theatre Royal and Opera House, on Saturday March 19<sup>th</sup> 1994, (Appendix II.15) as part of Bretfest, an annual performing arts festival initiated by the then Bretton Hall, University College of Leeds. The unprecedented success of this first production precipitated an invitation from Jude Kelly at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, to present for two nights, March 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> 1995, (Appendix II:16) in their seven hundred seat Quarry theatre, the same production, but as a community effort, involving

students from Bretton Hall as well as community participants from Chapeltown and Harehills in Leeds. This was yet another unprecedented success. The production played to full houses for two nights.

Carnival Messiah was first professionally co-produced by myself and the West Yorkshire Playhouse, assisted by an Arts Council of England grant of £100,000 towards a four week run between September 20 and October 16, 1999, (Appendix II:17) featuring a Company of one hundred and twenty-five performers, thirty-two of which were professional actors, dancers, masqueraders and musicians. The professional company included the seven minstrels or urban griots played by Ram John Holder, Kerry Frampton, Nigel Wong, Renee Castle, Jeremy Dobbs, Benedicta Seierup and Matt Minkin. Mother Earth was performed by Ella Andall. Mama God and her two alter egos were performed by Jean Binta Breeze covered by Michelle Scally, Donald Edwards and Haiden Medina. The Chantuelle was performed by Brian Green. The Pierrot Grenade was performed by Alyson Brown. The lead Robber was performed by Ronald Samm. The Ragga Storyteller was performed by Tom Briggs Davis. Mary, Joseph and Joseph's brother were performed by Ann Fridal covered by Simone Sauphanor, Brian

Green and Ronald Samm The Lone disciple was performed by Brian Green. Eshu, the Dark Angel was performed by David Hamilton. Pontius Pilate was performed by Jo Jo Moorhouse. Jesus was performed by Jem Dobbs, Donald Edwards, David Mitchell and Ram John Holder; The two thieves were performed by Brimah Kallon and Tim Arber; The Evangelist was performed by David Mitchell; The Dove of Peace was performed by Alyson Brown; The Voice of Truth was performed by Ronald Samm; The Domette was performed by Ayodele Jones and the !HallelulliaH! singers were performed by Stella Litras, Laura Schofield, Tom Briggs Davis and Ella Andall.

The professional musicians included the musical director Michael Lovelock on keyboards, Roy Johnson also on keyboards. Charlie Moore on kit Drums, Jock Docherty on lead guitar, Jims Goldingay on Bass guitar, Sam Bell, Danny Templeman, Mark Taylor and Andrew Penny on African percussion. Seiko Susso on Kora and percussion Dudley Nesbitt on steelbans and percussion and DJ Soul Criminal on Decks.

The community company were recruited during an all-day open audition which took place on Sunday March 07<sup>th</sup>, 1999. (Appendix II:14) Most of them hailed from the general Leeds community. Their numbers were

augmented by thirty Performing Arts students studying for their first degrees' at Bretton Hall, University College of Leeds. The majority of them played the 'People of the World', whilst the others made up the twelve member off-stage choir. The Steelband was provided and supported by the Leeds Music Services, rehearsed at the Leeds College of Music and recruited from students studying the instrument with Dudley Nesbitt at several schools throughout Leeds. (Appendix: Programmes and casting for 2002, 2003 and 2004)

The community cast who were rehearsed separately from the Steelband were subjected to a rigorous three-month, sixteen hour weekend training programme which was then augmented by one week of full-time rehearsal followed by four weeks of six day evening rehearsals with the professional Company members and five days of full-time technical rehearsals on stage. (Appendix II.2: The Education Programme). This model of casting and training has been used as the template for all consequent productions of Carnival Messiah in both the United Kingdom and in Trinidad and Tobago. The creative team included the following personnel. Conceiver – Geraldine Connor: Co writers Geraldine Connor and Mark Tillotson: Artistic Director – Geraldine Connor: Co- Director – Mark Tillotson: Production Designer –

Wayne Berkeley: Masquerade and Costume designer – Clary Salandy: Musical supervisor – Andre Tanker: Musical Director – Michael Lovelock: Chorographer – Carol La Chapelle: Lighting Designer – Robert Bryan: Sound Designer – Mic Pool: Chorus Master – Michael Steele – Eytle and Steelband Director – Dudley Nesbitt. It is important to note that because of the nature of the casting and varying performance abilities of the Company as a whole, these key personnel were chosen not only for their creative ability but equally so for their pedagogical skills. (Appendix I.2: Biographies and Appendix II17,18 &19: Programmes and casting for 2002, 2003 and 2004).

Carnival Messiah was conceived in the tradition of 'gayap' (a Trinidadian traditional enactment of self-help to the accompaniment of a cappella call and response vocal techniques) and its aesthetic evolution is a reflection of this process. Many of the performers who took part in the first professional production of Carnival Messiah in 1999 and even some who came later, are responsible for partially developing some of its narrative, music and lyric. The first utterances of Mama God were contributed by Jean "Binta" Breeze. The Pierrot Grenade's discourse was penned by Alyson Brown. The narrative of the minstrels/urban griots is the end product of a joint effort

between themselves, Mark Tillotson and myself. The Robber speeches performed in Trinidad and Tobago were penned by Brian Honore and the authentic fancy Sailor dance chorographed by Ralph Dyette as well as the original ole' mas conceived by Bunny Deiffenthaler and John Cumberbatch, the graphic representation of which presented as a play on the name of Sadaam Hussein, and read.... " is Bush who mad....because is 'Saddam who sane'.(Queen's Hall production:2003).

#### **NATIONAL PRESS REVIEWS 1999 (Appendix II. 6, 7 & 8)**

The critics wrote of this 1999 production ".....This new country I thought, was the creation of an expansive genius, a place where dance, movement, colour and music provide a vibrant landscape in which peoples and cultures are united in an exhilarating sense of common humanity and spirituality.....Carnival Messiah is a production which exudes quality, innovation and integrity whilst exemplifying a completely new direction as regards cultural and artistic aesthetic.....what we're seeing here is epic.....It combines theatre, music, dance, visual art, event theatre and spectacle with a huge cultural and racial mix.....there are Afro-Caribbeans, Asians, Chinese, Filipinos and European....I've never seen diversity on such a scale.....This new country I thought, was the creation of an expansive genius, a place



**Figure 133: Ole' mas - 'is Bush who mad because it is Sadaam who sane**



where dance, movement, colour and music provides a vibrant landscape in which peoples and cultures are united in an exhilarating sense of common humanity and spirituality'. Stephen Biscoe: The Yorkshire Post 21.09.99

The Guardian newspaper gave the production a five star rating. "This really shouldn't work. Geraldine Connor's ambitious attempt to marry Handel's Messiah with traditional West Indian Carnival ought to be an epic disaster.... yet a packed playhouse grants it a standing ovation....the key message however, is to brilliantly equate the Resurrection with the emancipation of black people....more than that, this multi-racial, multi-generational epic provides powerful evidence of what unity can achieve....Carnival Messiah is indeed an immaculate conception". Dave Simpson: The Guardian 29.09.99

"You know that a production has been really exciting when you get up and join in the standing ovation and your knees are wobbly.....Carnival Messiah is a must see – a musical extravaganza with stunning Caribbean costume.....the show is a staggering fusion of Handel's Messiah with black and world music styles – everything from traditional Oresha chanting to hip hop....and inspired pan-religious pastiche with the spirit of

a street party.....Carnival Messiah is the West Yorkshire Playhouse's millennial alternative to Tony Harrison's celebrated adaptation of the Mysteries.....". Kate Bassett: The Daily Telegraph 28.09.99

".....it is a joyous glorification of life seen through the peoples, music, religions and culture of the Caribbean carnival/Mas cycles.....highlights – where to begin? The classical ragga For unto Us a Child is Born, the soca/bhangra Hosanna, the unexpected living tableau of da Vinci's Last Supper, the Steelpan Hallelujah, the spine-tingling gospel/operatic He was Despised, the Crucifixion on stilts.....(Carnival Messiah is).....one of the more inspiring vistas to sweep before recent audiences, this should become a regular fixture in the nation's calendar..... As a production, it is something of a theatrical miracle".....Nick Awde: The Stage 30.09.99. (Appendix II.3: Previews, reviews and letters 1999, 2002, 2003 and 2004).

## **FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIP**

Carnival Messiah went on to be produced again - this time supported by an Arts Council of England's £70,000 grant, as an initiative of the Commonwealth Games Arts Festival - to great acclaim and more full houses, at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, for a second time. This, for

a five week run between June 22 and July 27, 2002. Additionally, at the special invitation of the government of Trinidad & Tobago,

# Republic Bank is the presenting sponsor of "CARNIVAL MESSIAH"

## A Theatrical Miracle!!

"Carnival Messiah" has been called many names. Breathtaking!! A Theatrical Miracle!! All the spectacle and colour of the Caribbean!! Inspired by Handel's oratorio, Geraldine Connor has brilliantly reinterpreted this classic production with roots indelibly grounded in the Caribbean.

This production literally exploded onto the international artistic stage in 1999 and has played to full houses ever since. Queen's Hall, artistically "trini to the bone", reconstructed, revitalized, reenergized and repositioned to deliver The Arts at the highest standards of excellence and "Carnival Messiah" a re-interpreted masterpiece of one of the world's celebratory oratorios coming together to formally reopen this Trinidadian architectural icon, Queen's Hall. It seemed inevitable a match made in artistic heaven.

Many may point to the fact that most of the principals in this production are Trinidadian and Tobagonian, sons and daughters of the soil, who saw having this production at Queen's Hall as a gift to their fellow citizens, and this is a wonderful gesture, but Carnival Messiah offers so much more.

This production encompasses all of the art forms, involves all of the ethnic groups of Trinidad and Tobago and celebrates the multiplicity of faiths and the multicultural wonder of this twin island republic.

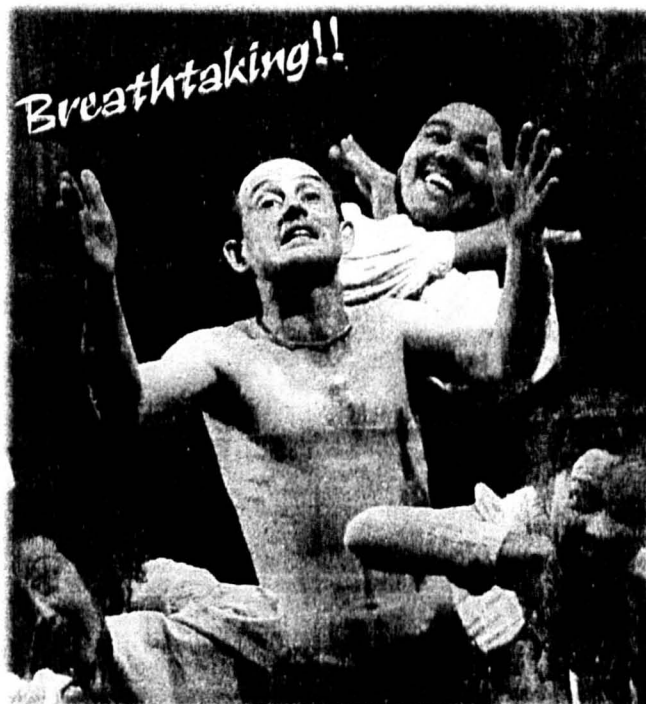
It's a fusion of African, Asian, Middle Eastern, European cultures and rhythms; Pan, drama, dance, rapso, calypso, tassa, socca, and drums a cultural callaloo.

Every aspect of the arts in its many manifestations and interpretations is included; none is left out.

In seeking to find the right blend of the arts to celebrate the formal reopening of Queen's Hall, the Board of Management pored over many artistic possibilities but ultimately believed that this production eschewed all that is excellent in Trinidadian and Tobagonian art and culture: that it also touched the wider Caribbean and showed the national community in a tangible way, the heights to which our talented artists

that commands the soundest financial benefits to its participants, but this daughter of the soil has waived all licensing fees to help make this international production possible and gives a gift that ensures her nation enjoys its own excellence.

De Silva recognizes that arts and culture can change people's lives and be the key that leads to renewed self confidence and the



and artistes have taken local arts and culture.

This is in keeping with the vision of the Acting Chair, Anmarie De Silva and the Board of Management of Queen's Hall as a National theatre is committed to providing facilities of the highest international standards for the presentation of the performing arts and cultural events. It also aims to encourage exceptional artistic expression and to attract productions of international repute.

Celebrated Trinidadian musicologist Geraldine Connor has created a work of highest international standard a production

building of self esteem, something that remains so important to our youths today.

One of the matinees has been presented to the Minister of Education, Hazel Manning to allow as many schools as possible to experience "Carnival Messiah" in the re-developed Queen's Hall. It is hoped that through participation in this production at an artistic, technical and educational level, many Trinidadians and Tobagonians may seek to explore their own creative potential and in addition, relationships based on artistic and creative congruencies may be developed with associated long-term benefits.

We are happy to welcome on board with us our Presenting Sponsor of Carnival Messiah, Republic Bank. Republic has a history of supporting the art in its annual "Pan Minors" programme and its sponsorship of select musical events at the University of the West Indies, but its unwavering corporate focus has always been on developing our nation's youth. For Republic Bank, while Carnival Messiah promises to be a spectacular show in itself, it also offers immense exposure and learning opportunities for our young local artistes in being part of a dazzling theatrical experience. To this end, Republic Bank is honoured to contribute to such a production, and to facilitate local participation in a production of international substance and value.

Our Associate Sponsors are:

**Presenting Sponsor:** Republic Bank Trinidad and Tobago.

**GOLD:** The Normandie Hotel, Virgin Atlantic Airways.

**SILVER:** British Gas Trinidad and Tobago Limited, BP Trinidad and Tobago LLC, The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago, National Lottery Control Board.

**BRONZE:** National Flour Mills, Caribbean Paper & Printed Products (1993) Ltd, TIDCO

**ORDINARY:** Angostura, Advance Dynamics, Island People, and Guardian Life.

Tickets are priced at \$150, \$200 and \$250 and are available at selected Republic Bank branches (Long Circular Mall, Trincity Mall, Independence Square, Gulf City Mall and Centre City Mall locations) and at the box office at Queen's Hall. Ticket can also be purchased on-line at [www.islandevents.com](http://www.islandevents.com) / Carnival Messiah and for more information please call 674 7467.



CARNIVAL MESSIAH



WY PLAY HOUSE



Republic Bank



MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & GENDER AFFAIRS



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# Thank You for your Support

To all of our sponsors, well-wishers, patrons and friends,  
the Ministry of Culture & Tourism and  
the Board of Management of Queen's Hall say

**THANK YOU**  
for making  
**CARNIVAL MESSIAH**  
a huge success!



Carnival Messiah successfully premiered there in July 2003, at a cost of some \$ T&T 5 million (£500,000) for twelve performances between July 20 – 29, 2003, to celebrate the opening of their newly refurbished National Theatre facility, Queen's Hall. In February 2004, Carnival Messiah went on to be successfully produced for a second time, at a cost of some \$T&T 7 million (\$TT700,000,00) during the 2004 Carnival season for five performances between February 16 – 20, 2004, at and by Queen's Hall in collaboration with Dreamteam Entertainment LLC and myself, specifically as an Investor's Audition toward mounting a prospective Broadway production.

#### **THE FUTURE – BROADWAY, NEW YORK**

As a direct result of these performances, contracts have recently been exchanged with the Los Angeles based Dreamteam Entertainment LLC with a view toward taking Carnival Messiah to Broadway, New York, with a projected opening of Spring 2006. To date, in a total of some eighty performances in four separate productions, over fifty thousand people have attended Carnival Messiah.



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FROM left: project manager, **George P Singh Jr**; producer and creator of *Carnival Messiah*, **Geraldine Connor**; acting chairperson of the Queen's Hall Board of Directors, **Ann Marie de Silva**, Gender and Culture Minister; **Joan Yuille-Williams**; Minister of State, **Eddie Hart** and **Derrick Lewis** of Island People, at the conclusion of the launch of the play's 2004 run.

Photo:  
STEPHEN  
DOOBAY



## The 'Messiah' on Broadway

By SATEESH MAHARAJ

THE foyer area at the Queen's Hall was filled with anticipation recently.

Everyone knew this wasn't just about the launch of the 2004 production of *Carnival Messiah*.

Finally, after a brief introduction by Project Manager George P Singh Jr, Acting Chairperson of Queen's Hall Board of Directors, Ann Marie de Silva broke the tension.

"The promises made in 2003 are about to be realised," she announced. "We said that *Carnival Messiah* would go to Broadway. *Carnival Messiah* is on its way to Broadway. We are here doing this production (as a) farewell, Trinidad style, to *Carnival Messiah* on its way to Broadway. It will be an exciting time."

The play *Carnival Messiah*, is a reinterpretation of Handel's *Messiah* set in the atmosphere of Trinidad Carnival.

This year the musical is being run at Carnival for potential investors to see it in the setting of Trinidad Carnival.

Some of the powerhouses expected to take in the show include representatives Fox Searchlight Television and US music mogul Babyface.

Other still to be named celebrities will also be coming in to view the show.

This influential crowd will be treated to a celebrity night on Carnival Friday after the show.

Derrick Lewis of Island People, part responsible for successful fetes such as *Amnesia*, *Insomnia* and *Girl Power*, tantalised the mind with a sneak peek into how that evening would unfold.

He said that many events of this nature and magnitude would be marked with sepa-

rate festive events.

With a low voice and a subtle smile he continued: "But this is Port of Spain. This is Trinidad. This is Carnival Friday night. So, welcome to the land of fete, where investors, producers, cast members, audience, dignitaries, celebrities and the fete-loving public get together to celebrate the *Messiah*. The vision is a choreographed ending of the *Carnival Messiah*. It takes the people, the music, the excitement from within Queen's Hall flowing hand in hand into this foyer and onto the esplanade of the Queen's Hall into a celebration that starts the Carnival with an ultra inclusive soiree titled 'Celebrate the *Messiah*'. We are going to produce it. We are going to keep some surprises."

Geraldine Connor, the producer/creator of *Carnival Messiah* was endless in her thanks for all involved in the show.

"I've been thinking about this for years," she said. "Dreams are coming true here."

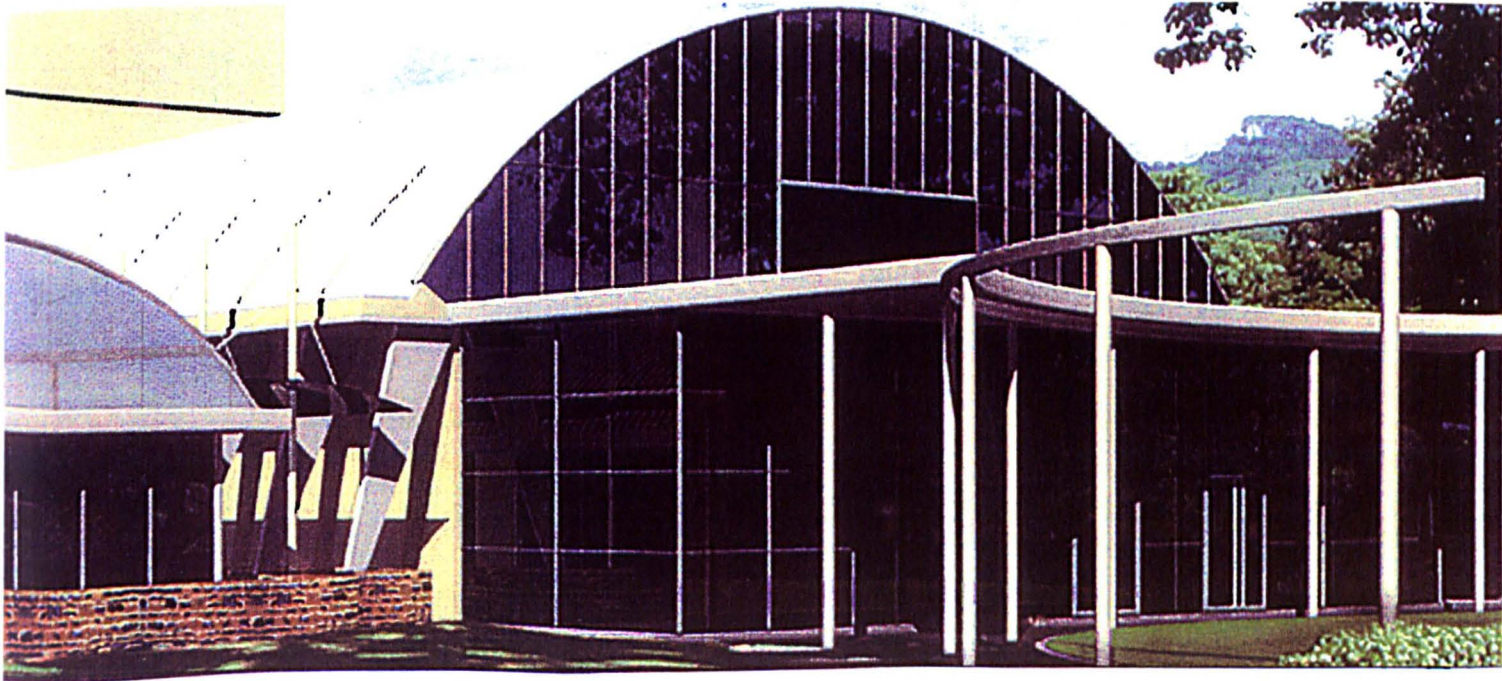
Connor continued: "It is my wish that *Carnival Messiah* be experienced (and) all artists in Trinidad and Tobago who were involved in any way with it can use it as a springboard and a catalyst for their own artistic careers."

Much to the surprise of many gathered at Queen's Hall, Connor broke the news that she had left her teaching job at the University of Leeds earlier this month to dedicate herself to *Carnival Messiah*. Connor taught a music study degree course in a full-time capacity for 14 years at the school.

"I can't realise my dream if I continue"

MESSIAH  
continues  
on next page

**Figure 137: The newly re-furbished Queen's Hall, Trinidad & Tobago**



## **QUEEN'S HALL, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

In Trinidad and Tobago I extended the production to include foyer decoration and pre-show creative activity which took place outside the foyer in the theatre grounds, as well as inside the foyer. This consisted firstly of decorating the huge Samaan Tree that dominated the front of the Theatre Grounds with hanging colours and shapes made out of long strips of torn coloured cloth and atmospheric lights, this with a view to making it look like a supernatural Silk Cotton tree. Inside the auditorium, I chose to suspend above our prospective audience's heads', Clary Salandy's dramatic Queen masquerade costume of Mama God and her child, which was conceived and played during the year 2000 at Notting Hill Carnival when we took Carnival Messiah the stage production and put it on the road as Carnival Messiah the Street Experience for London's Notting Hill Carnival. This masquerade band in fact, received full honours, winning masquerade band of the Year 2000. The Queen costume's design based on the concept of Mama God, was designed as a three metre head of a black Madonna and her child in a forty by twenty foot span of materials that represented all the countries and oceans of the world.

**Figure 138: Carnival Messiah Gala Opening 2003 at Queen's Hall**



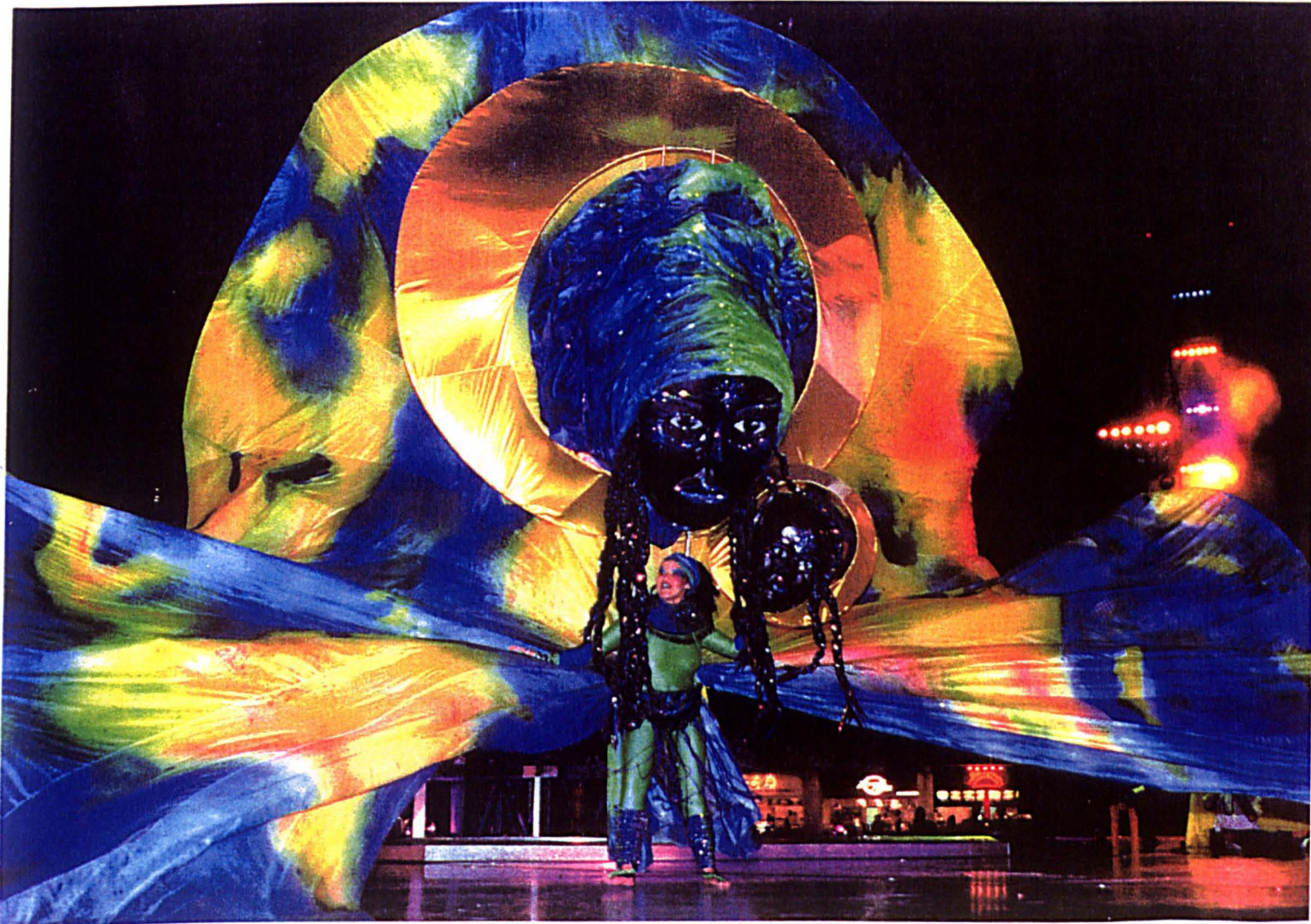
**Figure 139: Carnival Messiah Gala Opening 2004 at Queen's Hall**



**Figure 140: Mama God suspended above the heads of the audience in the foyer of Queen's Hall, 2003 and 2004**



**Figure 141: 'Carnival Messiah –The Street Experience'**  
**on the road at Notting Hill Carnival 2000**





**Figure 142: 'Carnival Messiah –The Street Experience'  
on the road at Notting Hill Carnival 2000**



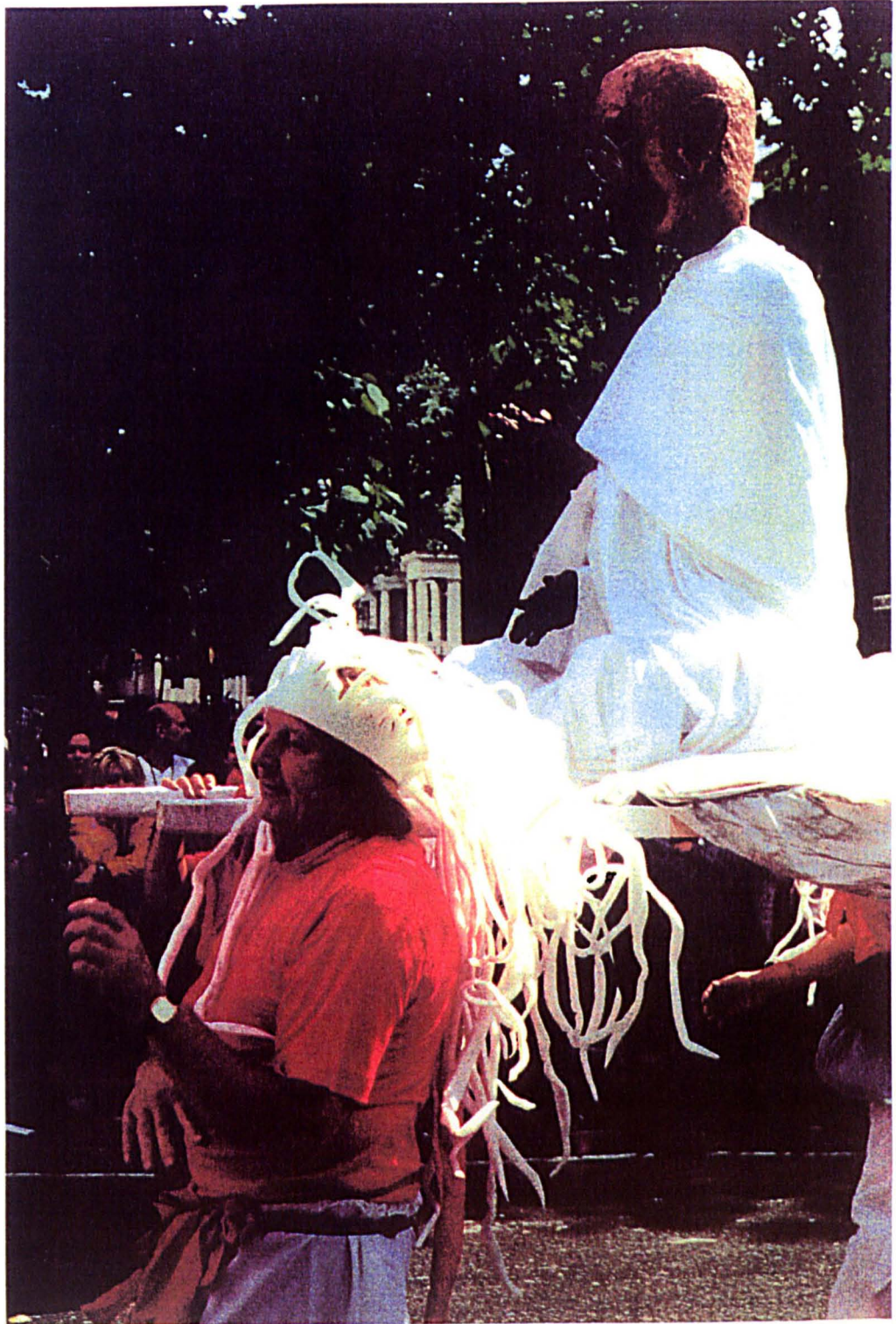
**Figure 143: 'Carnival Messiah –The Street Experience' on the road at Notting Hill Carnival 2000**



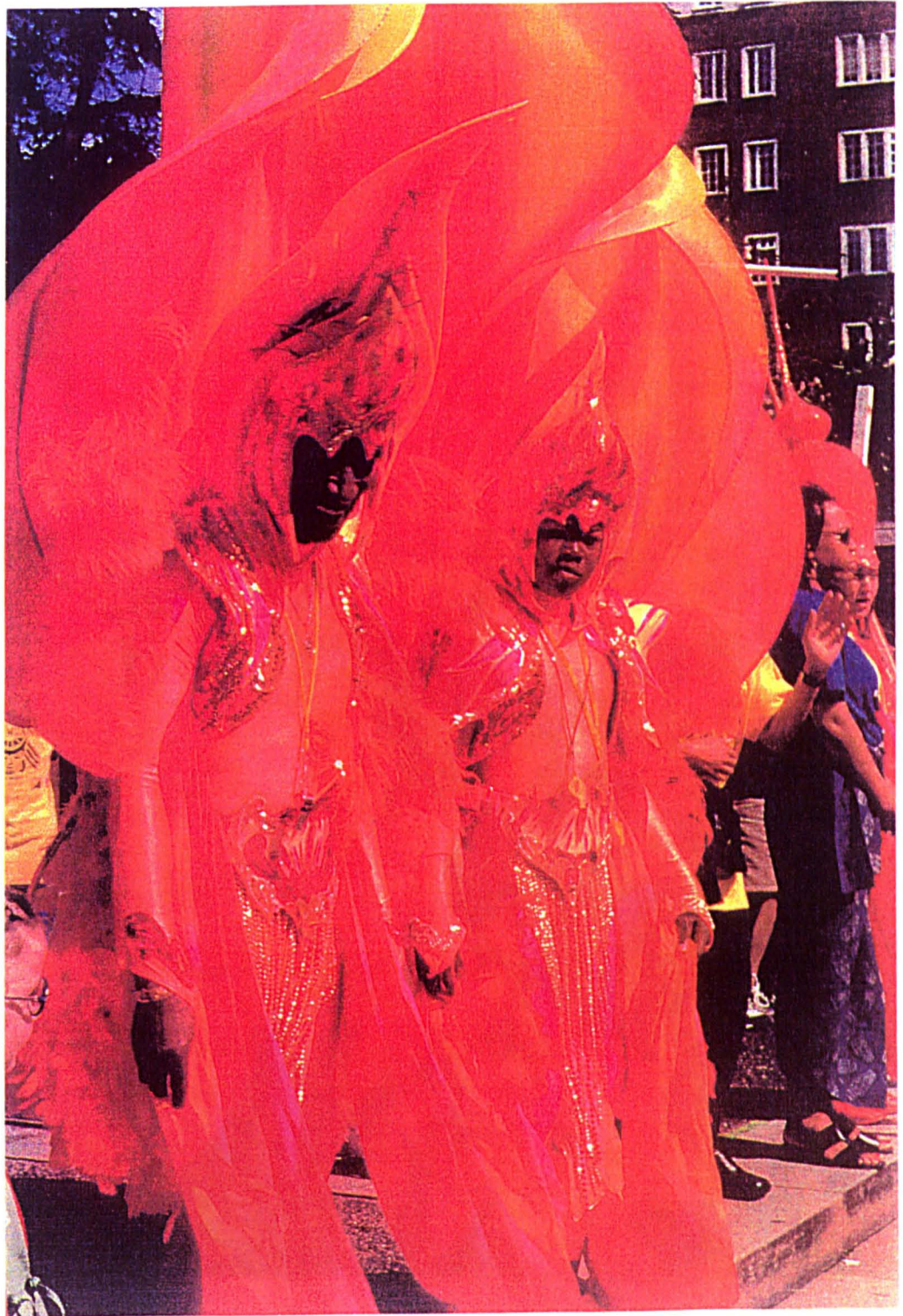
**Figure 144: 'Carnival Messiah –The Street Experience'**  
on the road at Notting Hill Carnival 2000



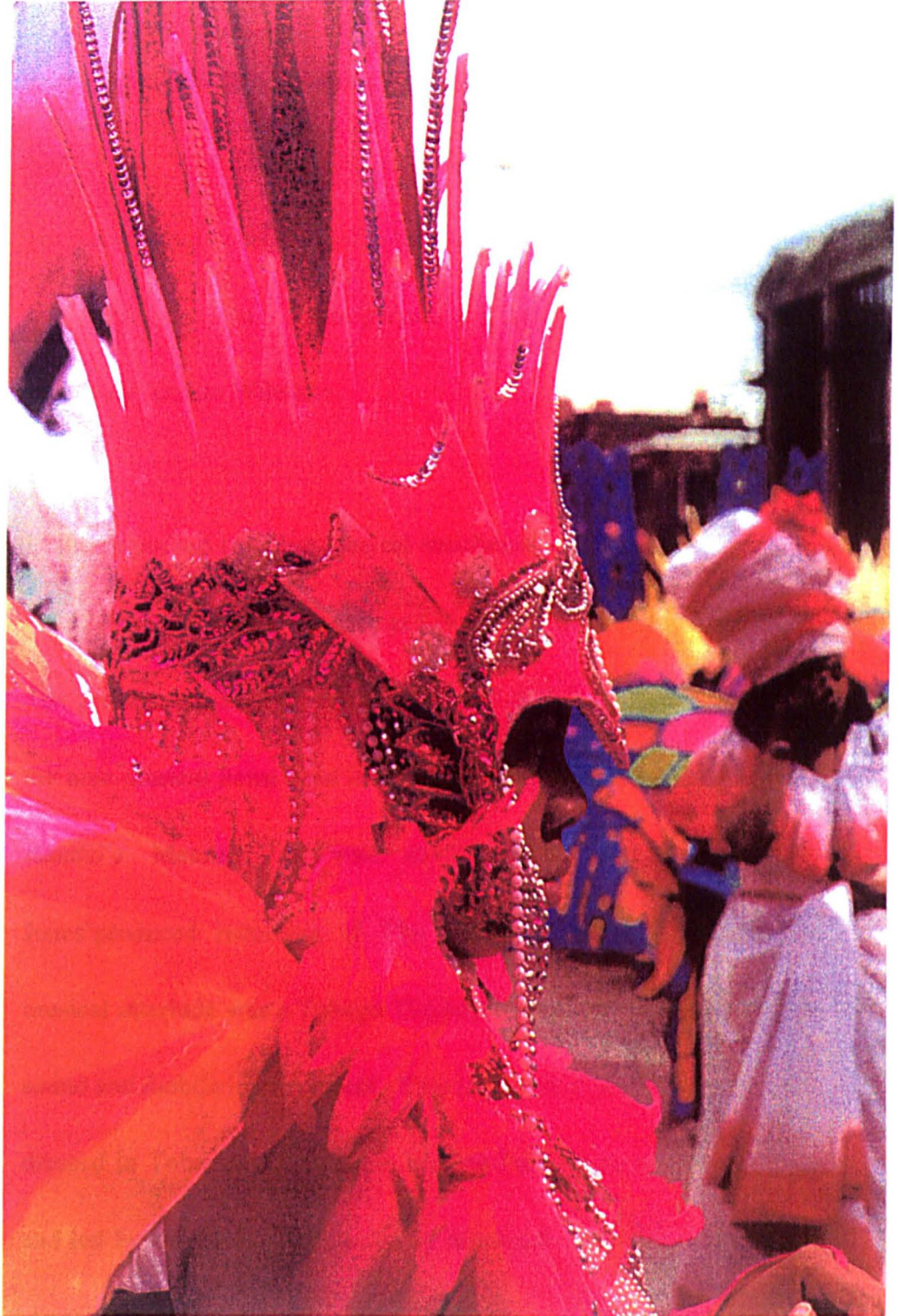
**Figure 145: 'Carnival Messiah –The Street Experience'  
on the road at Notting Hill Carnival 2000**



**Figure 146: 'Carnival Messiah –The Street Experience'  
on the road at Notting Hill Carnival 2000**



**Figure 147: 'Carnival Messiah – The Street Experience'  
on the road at Notting Hill Carnival 2000**



Added to this initial foyer based spectacle I organised for six Ole Mas characters to play masquerade and mingle in between the arriving guests.....two of which, a Pierrot Grenade (Felix Edinborough) and and a Midnight Robber (Brian Honore), had speech, two of which played Ole Mas (Bunny Dieffenthaller and John Cumberbatch) and carried placards and two of which represented traditional Carnival characters - the Fancy Sailor played by Ralph Dyette and a Blue Devil played by Amadu Wiltshire.

I then organised two live musical interludes which played alternately for a twenty minute period each and piped pre-show auditorium music. The pre-show auditorium music consisted of the original renditions of the nine musical items used in Carnival Messiah that were taken from Handel's Messiah, as well as renditions from the Quincy Jones'produced recording of The Soulful Messiah. The first live musical interlude was a Tobago Tamarind band which was acoustic in sound and mobile in movement. This consisted of six male performers dressed in Tobago folk costume making folk music which was sung and led by a fiddle, accompanied by tamarind or tambour drums and miscellaneous hand percussion. This group of musical troubadours

greeted arriving guests and audience whilst moving around and through them, within and outside of the auditorium. The other musical interlude was a stationary steelband of approximately twelve players, set up in one corner of the foyer area of Queen's Hall. They played a repertoire of classical music as well as popular calypso and folk song. To complete the pre-show foyer activity, I arranged for the five minute call into the theatre for the prospective audience to be heralded by three performers who blew conch shells using a technique of hocketting mixed with vocal announcement for the count-down.