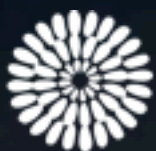


A UTOPIA THEATRE AND SHEFFIELD THEATRES PRODUCTION

# CROWN OF BLOOD



UTOPIA  
THEATRE

SHEFFIELD  
THEATRES

Wed 11 - Sat 14 Feb 2026

BELGRADE

# CROWN OF BLOOD

By **Oladipo Agboluaje**

**A Utopia Theatre and Sheffield Theatres Production**

Crown of Blood has been developed with the support of the National Theatre's Generate programme.

Running time approximately 2 hours plus interval

Set in 19th Century Yorubaland, Nigeria

Crown of Blood opened at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield on Monday 2 February 2026



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**SHEFFIELD  
THEATRES**

The Generate Programme

**National  
Theatre**

Utopia Theatre CIO is a Registered Charity No 1192008

programme design & print **JOHN  
GOOD** [www.johngood.com](http://www.johngood.com)

# CAST

Gboun-Gboun, Spy, Soldier  
Opaleye / Kundi  
Oyebisi  
Afilaka / Seriki Ogedengbe / Awosika  
Iwalagba, Èsù  
Aderemi  
Ayan / Ashabi / Ayebami  
Iya Agan / Iyanifa  
Moremi / Woman  
Arokin  
Ashadele  
Aremo Adekanbi

**Omobolanle Akanbi**  
**Jude Akuwudike**  
**Kehinde Bankole**  
**Tunji Falana**  
**Patrice Naiambana**  
**Deyemi Okanlawon**  
**Adeniyi Olusola Morolahun**  
**Adura Onashile**  
**Kayefi Osha**  
**Toyin Oshinaike**  
**Mo Sesay**  
**Tope Tedela**

# CREATIVE TEAM

Director & Co-Composer  
Writer  
Set and Costume Designer  
Lighting Designer  
Sound Designer & Sound No1  
Movement Consultant  
Fight Director  
Co-Composer & Musical Director  
  
Executive Producer

**Mojisola Kareem**  
**Oladipo Agboluaje**  
**Kevin Jenkins**  
**Alexandra Stafford**  
**Rob Hart**  
**Ben Wright**  
**Bethan Clark**  
**Kayefi Osha**  
  
**Mojisola Kareem**

# PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager  
Company Stage Manager  
Deputy Stage Manager  
Assistant Stage Manager  
Wardrobe Supervisor  
Costumes

Wardrobe Maker  
Dresser & Wardrobe Maintenance  
Dresser  
Sculptor  
Scenery Construction

Production LX & Programmer  
Lighting Operator  
Duty Sound  
Sound No 1  
Sound No 2  
Technical Stage Manager  
Duty Stage  
Fly Operator  
Fit-up LX Crew  
Fit-Up Stage Crew  
Production Photographer  
Production Capture  
Marketing and Communications Consultant  
Producer

**Phil McCandlish**  
**Shona Wright**  
**Olivia Dudley**  
**Laini Johnson**  
**Emma James**  
**Goldspot Media House, Nigeria**  
**Sheffield Theatres Wardrobe Dept**  
**Sarah Poxton**  
**Megan Peace**  
**Chloe Gentry**  
**Jack Poole, Poile Art**  
**Belgrade Theatre Scenery,**  
**Set Blue Scenery, Splinter**

**David Coull**  
**Freya Carey - Wood**  
**Jason Sylvester**  
**Rob Hart**  
**Alice Koszler**  
**Matt Harper**  
**Izzie Porter**  
**Mike Molloy**  
**Adam Warren, Tom Simkins**  
**Katherine Hodgson, Matt Rowley**  
**Anthony Robling**  
**Pilot Theatre**  
**Shirley Harris for diva creative**  
**Henrietta Duckworth**

## PRODUCTION THANKS

**Lekan Balogun, Ajide Adeyemi, Emmanuel Adetoye, Tobi Bamtefa, Babatunde Euba, Julius Obende, Rose Aida Sall Sao, Olowu Busayo, Theo Ogundipe, Mervin Claasen, Helena Kablinovi Ć, Felix Lier, Yvette Ngum, Eva-Lotte Reimer, Yvette Hutchison, Oluwatosin Tume, Sola Adeyemi, Annette Bühler-Dietrich, African Theatre Association and the University of Stuttgart. Esho Dorcas Aykine and the Goldspot crafts team, Rebecca Todd.**

## UTOPIA THEATRE EDUCATION RESOURCES

Discover Utopia Theatre Education Pack for schools and youth groups.

Learn all about the creative processes of designing and directing a large-scale production like Crown of Blood, the background of the playwright Oladipo Agboluaje, and take an in-depth look at some of the complex themes portrayed on the stage.

For more details contact [info@utopiatheatre.co.uk](mailto:info@utopiatheatre.co.uk)

## ACCESS PERFORMANCES

By Irmina St Catherine

**Signed performance**

Fri 14 Feb 2pm



# IN REHEARSAL

Rehearsal photography by **DivaCreative**



Kehinde Bankole



Adura Onashile



Praise Ishola, Toyin Oshinaike



Tope Tedela, Patrice Naiambana



Jude Akuwudike



Toyin Oshinaike



Tunji Falana



# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

**Crown of Blood** is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, reimagined in 19th-century Yorubaland — a world of kingdoms, divinities, and ancestral guidance. In this version, ambition, power, and moral collapse unfold not on the Scottish moor but within the rich political and spiritual landscape of Yoruba history. By situating the story here, we explore how leadership, prophecy, and personal desire collide in a society deeply attuned to fate, morality, and the guidance of the ancestors.

The Yoruba worldview amplifies Shakespeare's themes: the weight of moral choice, the consequences of unchecked ambition, and the tension between personal desire and communal responsibility. Yoruba cosmology and spiritual traditions are not decorative elements; they are vital frameworks that shape the characters' decisions, conflicts, and destinies. Ritual, music, poetry, dance, chant and oriki are woven into the storytelling, bringing ancestral memory to life on stage and creating a performance that speaks across time and culture.

In bringing this work to the stage, my aim has been to honour both the original text and the vibrancy of Yoruba performance traditions, transforming rather

than merely retelling the story. **Crown of Blood** invites audiences to confront universal questions: What do we sacrifice in pursuit of power? How do societies determine who is worthy to lead, and at what cost? The narrative examines the consequences of ambition untempered by empathy, showing how individual choices can shape the fate of an entire community.

This play stands at the intersection of history, myth, and the lived experience of the Yoruba people. Though rooted in the past, its themes, the fragility of justice, the lure of power, and the moral weight of leadership, remain profoundly relevant today. **Crown of Blood** is a dialogue between worlds, a journey into the human heart, and a celebration of Yoruba culture, reminding us that theatre thrives in the shared presence of audience and performer.

Thank you for joining us, for bringing your attention, your imagination, and your willingness to reflect. It is through you that this story finds new life.

**Mojisola Kareem**

Founder, Director, *Crown of Blood*  
CEO, Utopia Theatre



Mojisola Kareem and Oladipo Agboluaje

# WRITER'S NOTE

**Crown of Blood** is inspired by the Yoruba-language period dramas I watched when I lived in Nigeria in the 70s and 80s. I remember the impact the televised version of Duro Ladipo's seminal drama *Oba Koso* (first performed in 1963) had on me, a young boy from London discovering the richness of his parents' culture. *Oba Koso* is about Sango, Alaafin of Oyo, who, after his death, became deified as the god of thunder. *Oba Koso* was one of my first introductions to the dramatic representations of Yoruba history and mythology. Since then, it has been my dream to write an epic of my own.

I began the process of reworking *The Scottish Play* by looking at several adaptations. Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* and Orson Welles' 1948 film version of *Macbeth* were two major influences. I knew I was going to set the play in the 19th Century during the Yoruba civil wars, and books like Samuel Johnson's *The History of the Yorubas* (1921) and journal essays written about that period proved invaluable in finding episodes and characters that I could reimagine in the context of my version. I also knew I wanted to mix history with myth, fact with fiction. Historical figures like Moremi and Ogedengbe appear, as does Esu, the Yoruba deity, known more as a trickster god, but is, importantly, the chief inspector of sacrifices made by people to the supreme being Olodumare and the other deities. Thus, Esu is the gateway between Olodumare, deities and humans. I revisited period plays such as Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's*

*Horseman* and Ola Rotimi's *Kurunmi* and *The Gods are not to Blame*, itself a transposition of *Oedipus Rex* to Yoruba soil. I tapped into their nuances and dramatisations of the Yoruba world.

I was interested in how the play would speak to today's audiences. The period in which **Crown of Blood** is set was one of turmoil, conflict and displacement. Its themes of revenge, lust for power, fate and class bigotry, among others, will resonate differently with audience members. Its political landscape, though unique to the Yorubas, is similar to many political administrative setups, with the jockeying for position and the bartering of checks and balances for personal and political gain.

Above all, **Crown of Blood** is a human story about a man led astray in the search for power and a woman seeking revenge for a heinous injustice. Oyebisi, our Lady Macbeth character, plays a bigger role in shaping the events that lead to her husband, Aderemi's, downfall. Women have always played a pivotal role in Yoruba society, as seen in the importance of female deities and in the number of historical figures like the aforementioned Moremi and Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti that are still revered today.

It's been a joy working with Mojisola and the team on this project. I hope you get to enjoy delving into this unique world as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

**Oladipo Agboluaje**

Writer, *Crown of Blood*





Mojisola Kareem (director)



Tunji Falana



Cast, Creative and Stage Management Team of Crown of Blood

# CROWN OF BLOOD TIMELINE

## ACT ONE

### Scene 1

Before dawn, the palace throne room

### Scene 2

Later that day. The Oyo war camp

### Scene 3

Later that day. Awosika's shrine

### Scene 4

Later that day. The palace – Aderemi is promoted to Aare

### Scene 5

Later that day. Night – Aderemi's house

### Scene 6

A few weeks later. The Bebe Festival

### Scene 7

That same day. Bebe Festival, the Bara

### Scene 8

A few days later. The palace throne room

### Scene 9

The same day. Ashadele's farm

### Scene 10

The same day, night. Aderemi's house

## ACT TWO

### Scene 11

The next day. Aderemi's investiture

### Scene 12

The next day, night. Clandestine meeting between Ashabi and Opaleye

### Scene 13

The next day, noon. The city square – harmattan haze

### Scene 14

The same day, night. Aderemi's house. Oyebisi and Aderemi fight and make up

### Scene 15

A few days later, night. A courtyard in Ile-Ife

### Scene 16

The same day, night. Iyanifa's shrine

### Scene 17

Two weeks later. The two war camps

### Scene 18

The same day. The battle



Deyemi Okanlawon





Adeniyi Olusola Morolahun



Mo Sesay



Kehinde Bankole, Deyemi Okanlawon, Bethan Clark





Omobolanle Akanbi



Deyemi Okanlawon and Kehinde Bankole



Patrice Naiambana

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Yoruba society was heavily affected by war and Imperialism in the 19th century. The period saw a number of civil wars taking place between opposing Yoruba groups. The eventual collapse of the Oyo Empire meant that the region was reorganised, and conflicts over territory took place. Whereas royal households had previously prevailed in the region, these fell to warriors who wished to gain increasing levels of power, influence and financial wealth.

As in **Crown of Blood**, wars cause mass migration and displacement. This was the case in the 19th century, and this too caused friction and conflict. New settlements had to be created, and social relations forged. In **Crown of Blood** Adekanbi is sent to Ile-Ife to hide in safety. There he meets Moremi, a character based on the 12th century Yoruba queen whose own people were victims of constant invasion.

The inclusion of Seriki Ogedengbe is a reminder that Imperial forces were highly influential in the 19th century. It was a British Political Officer who ordered Ogedengbe's arrest, and he was released after the payment of £6000 which was an almost unimaginable amount of money in that period. This turbulent political climate of warrior ascendancy, mass displacement, and colonial influence directly informs the power struggles, character motivations, and setting of **Crown of Blood**.

## THE OYO EMPIRE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

The 19th century was a period of profound transformation for the Oyo Empire, once one of the most powerful states in West Africa. This historical context directly informs the political tensions in **Crown of Blood**:

## POLITICAL UPHEAVAL

The empire experienced multiple civil wars between opposing Yoruba groups. The traditional authority of royal households collapsed, replaced by military strongmen who sought power, influence, and wealth. This shift from hereditary to military power mirrors Aderemi's rise in the play.

## MASS DISPLACEMENT

Wars caused massive migration, creating new settlements and social friction. In **Crown of Blood**, Oyeibisi's displacement and the characters' exile to Ile-Ife reflect this historical reality. The trauma of displacement drives much of the play's revenge narrative.

## COLONIAL INFLUENCE

European imperial forces increasingly influenced the region. The inclusion of Seriki Ogedengbe, a historical figure arrested by British officials and released for an enormous ransom, reminds audiences of the colonial pressures affecting 19th-century Yoruba society.



# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NAMES IN THE YORUBÁ WORLDVIEW

Within the Yorùbá worldview, names are never arbitrary. They are carefully chosen expressions of identity, history, destiny and communal memory. A name can reveal lineage, social status, occupation, circumstance of birth, personal attributes, or spiritual purpose. Yorùbá people believe that *orúko ni ñ roni* which means “a name carries and shapes the person.” As a result, every name holds meaning and power and reflects the cosmological belief that character, destiny and earthly journey are deeply interconnected. In performance and storytelling, names become even more significant because they signal the moral, political and spiritual roles that individuals occupy within the community.

## GLOSSARY

### PEOPLE, TITLES AND ROLES

**Arokin:** Court historian; custodian of royal records and oral history.

**Kabiyesi:** “Your Majesty”; an honorific for a king.

**Alaafin:** The King of Oyo.

**Oyomesi:** The council of kingmakers and principal chiefs of Oyo.

**Basorun:** Prime Minister and head of the Oyomesi.

**Agbaakin:** A senior chief.

**Samu:** Royal official; in some traditions a ceremonial executioner.

**Abobaku:** A royal companion expected to die with the king (symbolically or ritually).

**Aremo:** Crown Prince; the king's eldest son.

**Iya Agan:** “Mother of Agan”; a high-ranking female official connected to the royal palace or masquerade society (Agan can also mean barren woman but in this context is a title).

**Alapinni:** Chief priest and head of the Egúngún (ancestral masquerade) cult.

**Gboun-Gboun:** Palace messenger. The name carries layered Yorùbá meaning: Gbo (from gbe) – to carry or to lift.

**Ohun:** voice.  
Together they imply “the one who carries the voice forward” – the person who bears messages, announcements and the king's words with speed and authority. The repeated form Gboun-Gboun also suggests quick movement or urgency.

**Ayan:** Praise singer / royal bard, usually accompanied by drums.

### SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL TERMS

**Ifá:** Yorùbá divination system and spiritual knowledge.

**Oluawo:** High Priest / supreme diviner.

**Aare Ona Kakanfo:** Field Marshal; supreme military general of the Oyo Empire.

**Calabash:** A gourd vessel. In Oyo tradition, sending someone an empty calabash is an order to commit suicide.

**Iku Baba Yeye:** Praise title for the Alaafin meaning “The Death that kills our fathers and mothers”; signifies supreme authority.

**Alase Ikeji Orisa:** “The authority next to the gods”; another praise title for the King.

### PLACE AND GROUP NAMES

**Oyo:** Historic capital of the Oyo Empire.

**Ekiti:** A Yorùbá subgroup/region within present-day Nigeria.

**Ilesha:** A major town in Yorùbáland, known for warriors.

**Ogedengbe:** Legendary Ijesha general and hero.

**Fulani:** Ethnic group of West Africa; contextually the Fulani Emirate forces.

**Caliphate:** Islamic state ruled by a caliph; here refers to the Sokoto Caliphate.

### MILITARY TERMS

**Balogun:** War general / prominent military commander.

**Kakanfo:** Shortened form of Aare Ona Kakanfo (supreme general).

### OTHER EXPRESSIONS

**Agan:** Can mean a barren woman but functions mainly as a title in this Context.

Trader's basket that moves from market to market – Yorùbá metaphor meaning a place without stability or fixed grounding.





## OMOBOLANLE AKANBI GBOUN-GBOUN

Omobolanle Akanbi is a versatile actor, producer, director, and consultant with extensive experience across theatre, television, and film. He is Outreach and Participation Manager at Utopia Theatre, leading youth and community programmes. Theatre credits include *Death and the King's Horseman*, *Moremi Ajasoro*, *Lion and the Jewel*, and *Efunsetan Aniwura*. Television work includes *Jenifa's Diary*, *The Flatmates*, and *Jolly Fellows*, while film credits feature *Shanty Town*, *Who's the Boss*, and *Omugwo*.

Winner of the AMVCA Best Short Film award, Bola's practice celebrates African heritage and champions underrepresented voices through performance, education, and community engagement.



## JUDE AKUWUDIKE OPALEYE, KUNDI

Jude Akuwudike is an acclaimed actor whose work spans theatre, film, television, radio, and voice performance. A RADA graduate, he has appeared on Broadway and stages across the UK, Europe, and the USA. Theatre credits include *Three Sisters* (National Theatre), *The Convert* (Young Vic),

*The Tempest* (Jamie Lloyd), and *House of Ife* (Bush Theatre). Film work includes *Eyimofe*, *Beasts of No Nation*, and Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. Television appearances include *The Crown*, *Gangs of London*, and *Fortitude*. Jude is celebrated for his versatility, bringing depth and nuance to both classical and contemporary storytelling.



## KEHINDE BANKOLE OYEBISI

Kehinde Bankole is an award-winning actress and producer with an extensive career in theatre, film, and television. Born in Lagos, she studied Mass Communication at Olabisi Onabanjo University while exploring modelling and music. Theatre highlights include performances at Shakespeare's Globe, while screen credits span Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney + and major Nigerian productions. She made her breakthrough in 2003 on *Super Story* and has since earned AFRIFF and AMVCA awards. Bankole is committed to celebrating African culture through performance, continually exploring diverse roles that reflect heritage, storytelling, and the vibrancy of Nigerian and global narratives.



## TUNJI FALANA AFILAKA, SERIKI OGEDENGBEAND AWOSIKA

Tunji Falana trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Acting. His theatre work includes *I, Jacques*, *Tom Thumb*, *Reimagining of the Duchess of Malfi*, and *How Nigeria Became*. Recent television includes *Suspect: The Shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes*. Tunji is also a creative producer, co-producing *MW The Musical* and serving as Associate Producer on Talawa Theatre Company's *Play On!*.

His work combines disciplined performance with innovative production, contributing to dynamic, culturally resonant theatre across the UK and Nigeria.



## PATRICE NAIAMBANA IWALAGBA, ÈŞÙ

Patrice Naiambana apprenticed as an African theatre artist in Sierra Leone with Dele Charley and Yulisa Amadu Maddy.

Theatre credits include Baba Segi in *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (Femi Elufowoju Jnr Ensemble), *Barbershop Chronicles* (National Theatre), Gower in *Pericles* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Ragamuffin* (Double Edge), for

the RSC Aslan in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Othello in *Othello*, and Steven Berkoff's *Coriolanus*. Screen credits include *Criminal Record*, *Damsel*, *Death in Paradise*, *Game of Thrones*, *Black Ops* and *It's A Sin*.

His own works include the Edinburgh Fringe First Award-winning *The Man Who Committed Thought*. He leads Diaspora Village and is developing *Perception Gap* in collaboration with Kathryn Hunter.



## ADENIYI OLUSOLA MOROLAHUN

### AYAN, AHSABI, AYEBAMI, KING'S MASQUERADER

Known professionally as Eyinju Olodumare, Adeniyi Olusola Morolahun is an actor, cultural educator, and master percussionist. A Tai Solarin University of Education graduate, he is founder of the Abuletic Brand and Kul of Àrt, promoting African performing arts and heritage. Adeniyi integrates acting, storytelling, rhythm, and movement in performances and workshops, mastering over 35 African drums.

Recognized with the Oodua Recognition Award and DAC International Award, he inspires global appreciation of African culture through immersive performance, teaching, and collaborations that celebrate identity, community, and cultural pride.



## ADURA ONASHILE

### IYA AGAIN AND IYANIFA

Adura Onashile is a Glasgow-based artist working across theatre, film, and performance. Her work is rooted in deeply visual, emotionally driven storytelling and often explores identity, power, and intimacy through formally bold approaches.

She is currently developing her second feature. Her short film *Expensive Shit*, adapted from her award-winning play, which premiered at the BFI London Film Festival and was nominated for a BAFTA in 2021.

Adura's theatre work has been staged internationally. She has collaborated with the National Theatre of Scotland, Royal Shakespeare Company, Young Vic, and the National Theatre, and was named one of *Screen Daily's* Stars of Tomorrow.



## KAYEFI OSHA

### MOREMI, WOMAN, CO-COMPOSER AND MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Deborah Lawal, known as Kayefi, is an award-winning Nigerian folk and Afro-Soul singer, songwriter, and creative director based in the UK. Drawing on Yoruba heritage, Ijala chants, and African rhythms, she creates culturally rooted and globally resonant music. She has performed across Nigeria, South Africa, Benin, Guinea, and the UK, winning awards including Best Traditional Music of Modern Inspiration and Best Female Vocalist (SICA Festival).

Kayefi composed original music for theatre, including *Death and the King's Horseman*, and created *Tales and Tunes*, merging music with oral storytelling, championing African culture through sound and performance.



## DEYEMI OKANLAWON

### ADEREMI

Deyemi Okanlawon is an actor, producer, and voice artist whose work spans theatre, film, television, and animation. He is known for performances that combine emotional precision with commanding physical presence across both classical and contemporary storytelling.

His stage credits include Wole Soyinka's *Trials of Brother Jero* and *Moremi: The Musical*. On screen, his work includes international and streaming productions such as the Japanese feature *Queen of Mars* and Netflix Originals including *Blood Sisters*, *The King's Horseman*, *King of Boys*, and *Far From Home*, alongside films streaming on Netflix and Prime Video such as *Lisabi*, *The Waiter*, *3 Working Days*, *A Green Fever* and *Castle & Castle*. In 2024, he produced and starred in *All's Fair in Love*, one of the most-watched films on Prime Video.

Deyemi's work also extends into voice performance, including the animated feature *Malaika: Warrior Queen*.

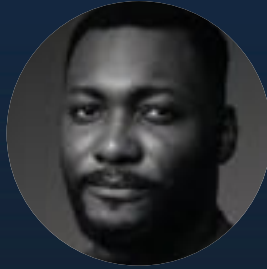


## TOYIN OSHINAIKE AROKIN

Oshinaike Toyin is an actor and director with over thirty years of experience on African and international stages. He has played Elesin Oba (*Death and the King's Horseman*), Baroka (*The Lion and the Jewel*), and Obierika (*Things Fall Apart*), among others. Directing credits include *Echoes from the Lagoon*, *Fela: Son of Kuti*, and *King Baabu*. Screen credits include *Roti*, *Still Water Runs Deep*, and *Nigerian Prince*.

Toyin is also a playwright, authoring *Wat's Dis All About* and *Brats & the Maid of the White House*. His career reflects dedication to African theatre and storytelling globally.

Mo is also a writer, with a TV script about Dr Barnardo recently optioned, reflecting his contributions to both stage and screen.



## TOPE TEDELA AREMO ADEKANBI

Tope Tedela is a multi-award winning Nigerian actor working across film, stage, and television. His theatre credits include performances in Ola Rotimi's *Man Talk*, *Woman Talk* and Ahmed Yerima's *The Wives*.

On screen, he has taken on lead and supporting roles in film and television projects in Nigeria and internationally, including Netflix's *Baby Farm*, *Blood Sisters* and *All the Colours of the World Are Between Black and White*.



## MO SESAY ASHADELE

Mo Sesay trained at Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art and has appeared in British films including *Young Soul Rebels* and *Bhaji on the Beach*. Theatre credits include *The Enfield Haunting*, *Coriolanus*, *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, and *Under the Black Flag*. Television work includes *Soldier Soldier*, *Dangerfield*, *Murphy's Law*, *Vera*, and *Endeavour*. Film credits include *Christmas Karma*, *Who Needs a Heart*, and *It's a Wonderful Afterlife*.





Kehinde Bankole



Patrice Naiambana and Deyemi Okanlawon



Kayefi Osha



Patrice Naiambana

# CREATIVE BIOGRAPHIES



## OLADIPO AGBOLUAJE WRITER

Oladipo Agboluaje is a celebrated playwright, educator, and mentor whose work spans African and postcolonial theatre. Recipient of the Alfred Fagon Award, Peggy Ramsey Award, and Pearson Award, he has also held fellowships at Freie University and served as a Royal Literary Fund fellow. He was the 2018/19 writer-in-residence of the National Theatre.

His plays include *Early Morning, Iyale – The First Wife*, and adaptations of *Mother Courage* and *The Hounding of David Oluwale*. A seasoned teacher, he has guided students at Goldsmiths, SOAS, and Cambridge, shaping the next generation of theatre-makers. His work blends sharp political insight with lyrical storytelling, exploring identity, heritage, and the transformative power of performance.



## MOJISOLA KAREEM DIRECTOR, CO-COMPOSER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,UTOPIA THEATRE

Mojisola Kareem is an award-winning director and founder of Utopia Theatre in Sheffield, celebrated for reimagining classic works through an African lens. Her storytelling champions authentic voices and challenges stereotypes, blending ritual, movement, and music in powerful productions. Under her leadership, Utopia Theatre has become a National Portfolio Organisation, launched a thriving Youth Academy, and established a Creative Hub supporting African communities and emerging artists. Recent work includes *Death and the King's Horseman*, *Anna Hibiscus' Song*, and *Here's What She Said To Me*. Mojisola's practice combines cultural heritage, rigorous craft, and visionary direction to create theatre that resonates across generations and continents.



## BETHAN CLARK FIGHT DIRECTOR

Bethan is a Fight Director, Intimacy Director and certified teacher with the British Academy of Dramatic Combat.

Credits include: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Sheffield Crucible); *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Cowboys*, *Romeo and Juliet* (RSC); *End*, *The Hot Wing King*, *Odyssey: The Underworld*; *Dixon and Daughters* (National Theatre); *Inside No. 9 Stage/Fright* (West End & UK Tour); *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Princess Essex*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Dracula*, *Ghosts*, *Our Country's Good*, *Wedding Band*, (Lyric Hammersmith); *Lord of the Flies*, *Coram Boy*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Chichester); *Marie and Rosetta* (Rose Theatre, Chichester & ETT); *Liberation* (Manchester Royal Exchange); *Red Rogue of Bala*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Mold Riots*, *Thick as Thieves* (Theatr Clywd), *The Ministry of Lesbian Affairs* (The Kiln); *Calamity Jane* (UK Tour); *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare North Playhouse); *Othello* (Liverpool Everyman); *The Swell* (Orange Tree Theatre); *Brassed Off*, *A Little Princess* (Theatre by the Lake); *Wendy: A Peter Pan Story* (Theatre Royal Bath); *Hello and Goodbye*, *A View from the Bridge* and *Everything is Possible: The York Suffragettes* (York Theatre Royal); *The Prince* (Southwark Playhouse); *Marvin's Binoculars* and *The Bolds* (Unicorn); *As You Like It* (Northern Broadsides); *The Last Ship* (Northern Stage & Tour); *Macbeth* (Queen's Theatre Hornchurch & Derby).



## ROB HART SOUNDDESIGNER & SOUND NO 1

Rob Hart is a theatre and film sound designer whose work blends field recordings, modular synthesis, and foley artistry. His designs can be heard in productions like *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *Eclipse*, and *The Conservatory of Populism*, as well as Utopia Theatre's *Iyalode of Eti* and *Here's What She Said to Me*. In film, he has contributed to over 30 V&A ASMR videos.

An experimental musician, Rob also performs solo and collaborates across genres including industrial, ambient, and folk. His work explores the immersive power of sound, creating atmosphere, texture, and emotional resonance that deepens storytelling in both theatre and film.





## KEVIN JENKINS

### SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER

Kevin Jenkins is a multidisciplinary designer whose work spans theatre, opera, and community productions. Trained at the Motley Theatre Design Course and an engineer by background, Kevin brings precision and imagination to every design. Credits include Utopia Theatre productions such as *Death and the King's Horseman*, *Anna Hibiscus' Song*, and *All Our Goals*, as well as shows for Sheffield Theatres and regional venues across the UK.

Known for his inventive use of space, colour, and texture, Kevin crafts environments that enhance narrative, evoke culture, and transform performance into fully immersive experiences for audiences.



## ALEXANDRA STAFFORD

### LIGHTING DESIGNER

Previously for Utopia Theatre: *Anna Hibiscus' Song*. Recent theatre credits include: *A Matter of Life and Death* (New Vic); *The Snowy Day*, *Well Done*, *Mummy Penguin* and *Oh, No George! (Can't Sit Still)*; *Murder For Two*, *A Tender Thing*, *The Kreutzer Sonata* (Chipping Norton Theatre); *Alice in Wonderland*, *Robin Hood*, *The Wind in the Willows* (Derby Theatre); *Wilko* (Queens Theatre Hornchurch); *Around The World in Eighty Days* UK Tour (Tilted Wig & York Theatre Royal); *Mugabe*, *My Dad and Me* (ETT & Brixton House, UK Tour); *Model Village*, *The Swearing Jar*, *The Great Almighty Gill* (New Perspectives); *Jack & The Beanstalk*, *Peter Pan* (York Theatre Royal & Evolution Productions); *Into Battle* (In Soft Wings Productions); *Bubble*, *Skellig*, *Kindertransport* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Around the World in 80 Days* USA & UK Tour New Vic production & Kenny Wax Family Entertainment; *Babe*, *The Sheep Pig* (Mercury Theatre Colchester); *Lava*, *All The Little Lights* (Fifth Word Theatre); *The Red Tree*, *Make Do and Mend* (Red Earth Theatre); *A Thing Mislaid* (Maison Foo); *Aidy the Awesome* (The Gramophones) and seventeen Family Pantomimes for Harrogate Theatre.



## BEN WRIGHT

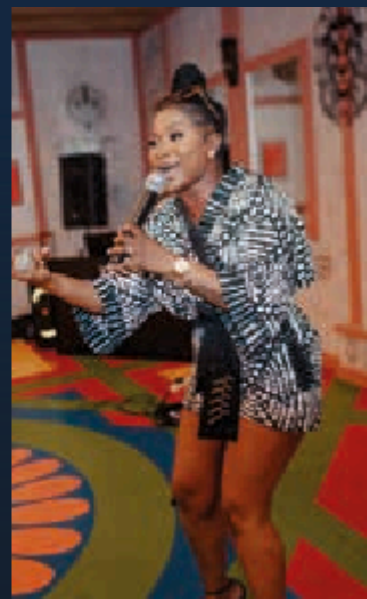
### MOVEMENT CONSULTANT

Ben is a choreographer, movement and intimacy director working across dance, opera, theatre, and film. He trained at the Ballet Rambert School and has served as Artistic Co-Director for Candoco Dance Company and Associate Artistic Director/Choreographer at Skånes Dansteater.

Recent movement work includes *Chariots of Fire* (Sheffield Theatres), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Opera North), *La Bohème* (Washington National Opera), *Don Giovanni* (The Metropolitan Opera, NYC), and *Orlando* (The Garrick, West End). His choreographic work includes *The Lost Thing* (Royal Opera House), the feature film *The Feeling of Going* (Skånes Dansteater), *A Space in the Dark* (Holstebro Danskompani), and the short film *Every Little Thing Is a Change* (Northern Ballet). His intimacy direction includes *The Line of Beauty* (Almeida Theatre), *My Master Builder* (Wyndham's, West End), *Quadrophenia* (Sadler's Wells), *My Policeman* (Amazon Studios), and *Funny Woman* (Sky Atlantic).

Ben crafts movement that conveys narrative, character, and emotion, enhancing the storytelling of every production he works on.

# UTOPIA THEATRE



Utopia Theatre is a bold and influential voice in African theatre in the UK, committed to amplifying African stories, voices, and experiences through dynamic performance, innovative digital work, and community engagement. Founded in 2012 and led by CEO and Artistic Director Mojisola Kareem, the company has grown into a nationally and internationally recognised force in contemporary African performance. As a National Portfolio Organisation funded by Arts Council England, and supported by the BFI, Utopia Theatre has earned a reputation for ambitious productions that inspire, challenge, and entertain diverse audiences.

Based at their creative hub in Sheffield, Utopia Theatre celebrates the richness of African and Western performing traditions, while promoting authentic, culturally grounded storytelling. The company has staged and toured acclaimed productions across the UK and internationally, including *Here's What She Said to Me*, *Anna Hibiscus' Song*, Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* (2025), and *Crown of Blood* (2026). These works are known for their emotional depth, cultural resonance, and inventive integration of music, movement, and ritual.

Central to Utopia Theatre's mission is community-driven engagement that empowers African communities, nurtures emerging artists, and inspires the next generation through programmes such as the Youth Academy, Community Ensemble, and Inclusive Ageing Project. Utopia Theatre creates pathways for young people, older adults, and underrepresented artists to access professional training, mentorship, and performance opportunities, fostering a new generation of creative leaders.

Utopia Theatre's landmark *Making Our Own Table* Symposium, 2026, brings together creatives, cultural leaders, and academics to forge a Manifesto for the development of African theatre.

'African Theatre Speaks' Utopia Theatre's podcast series explores the power, legacy, and future of African performance. Travelling through the history and heart of African Theatre, exploring ritual and revolution, storytelling and performance the series asks: Who gets to define African Theatre and where will its future take us?

Episodes feature Professor Wole Soyinka's *Death and The Kings Horseman*, Inua Ellams' *Barbershop Chronicles* and our production of *Crown of Blood*, tracing how African theatre continues to reinvent itself, on the mother continent and in the UK.

By combining artist development, digital innovation, and deep engagement with schools and communities, Utopia Theatre continues to energise the cultural landscape, positioning itself as a catalyst for change within the UK and internationally.

**[www.utopiatheatre.co.uk](http://www.utopiatheatre.co.uk)**

Founder, CEO & Artistic Director	<b>Mojisola Kareem</b>
Deputy Artistic Director	<b>Mo Korede</b>
Participation Manager	<b>Bola Akanbi</b>
Reception / Administration	<b>Lauren MacDonald</b>

## UTOPIA THEATRE ASSOCIATE ARTISTS

**Ajide Adeyemi**  
**Lee Affenpinscher**  
**Oladipo Agboluaje**  
**Maria Cassar**  
**Jennifer Farmer**  
**Julius Obende**  
**Juwon Ogungbe**

## UTOPIA THEATRE BOARD

**Maxine Greaves MBE (Chair)**  
**Rhonda Allen**  
**Victoria Barrett**  
**Joanna Graham**  
**Sarafina Manuel (AfroFina)**  
**Bookey Oshin DL**  
**Dr Preeti Raghunath**

Photography by **Precious Igbebor**



# **MANY VOICES, ONE MOVEMENT** **BUILDING NEW CHANGE FOR** **AFRICAN & DIASPORA CREATIVITY**

**FOLLOWING OUR FIRST SUCCESSFUL SYMPOSIUM IN SHEFFIELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2026, WE ARE INVITING ARTISTS, CREATIVES AND ACADEMICS, FROM ACROSS THE UK TO COME TO UTOPIA THEATRE'S SECOND SYMPOSIUM EVENT IN SHEFFIELD.**

**SAVE THE DATE : MONDAY 1 JUNE  
2026**

**WE ARE BRINGING ARTISTS, THINKERS AND ACADEMICS TOGETHER TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN AND DIASPORA ARTS. JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON VISIBILITY, OPPORTUNITY AND CREATIVE CHANGE WITH UTOPIA THEATRE.**

**EMAIL US AT [INFO@UTOPIATHEATRE.CO.UK](mailto:info@utopiatheatre.co.uk) OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE [WWW.UTOPIATHEATRE.CO.UK](http://WWW.UTOPIATHEATRE.CO.UK) TO FIND OUT MORE**



# Staff

## Board of Directors

**Jonothan Neelands (Chair)**  
**Annette Hay (Vice Chair)**  
**Harry Banga**  
**Colin Bell**  
**Jacqui Clements**  
**Rosalyn Forbes**  
**Robin Heer**  
**Tyrone Huggins**

**Peter Male**  
**Kerry Radden**  
**Thanh Sinden**  
**Karamjit Singh**  
**Tony Skipper**  
**Anjula Thiru**  
**Rebecca Warwick**

## Leadership

Chief Executive **Laura Elliot**  
Creative Director **Corey Campbell**  
Interim Chief Executive Officer **Emma Flatley**

## Senior Management

Interim Chief Operating Officer **Jo Phillips**  
Director of Audiences and Growth **Kingsley Jayasekera**  
Director of Producing and Co-Creation **Adel Al-Salloum**  
Director of Production & Operations **Adrian Sweeney**  
Associate Director **Jay Zorenti-Nakhid**  
Head of Business Support **Rachel van Blerk**  
Head of Communications **Ray Clenshaw**  
Head of People and Culture **Scarlet Morgan**

## Administration

Support Service Administrator **Alice Hayes**

## Belgrade Theatre Scenery

Head of Paintshop **Claire Winfield**  
Head of Construction **Steve Heir**  
Deputy Head of Paintshop **Katie Skyes**  
Freelance Deputy Head of Construction **Christian Bawtree**  
Scenic Painter **Phimphilai Wongprakot**  
Scenic Painter **Ella Goodier**  
Workshop Assistant **Jacob McCartney**  
Junior Carpenter **David Westwood**  
Freelance Scenic Painter **Catherine Briggs**  
Freelance Scenic Painter **Millie Cadwell**  
Freelance Scenic Painter **Jessica Hemstock**  
Freelance Scenic Painter **Isobel Letham**  
Freelance Scenic Painter **Holly McGonigle**  
Freelance Scenic Painter **Lynsey Reilly**  
Freelance Scenic Painter **Amy Schofield**  
Freelance Scenic Painter **Amelia Thomson**  
Freelance Carpenter **Alistair Angus**  
Freelance Carpenter **Noah Cousins**  
Freelance Carpenter **Jacob Wimpress**

## Catering Team

Catering Manager **Jacqueline Brown**  
Deputy Catering Manager **Tom Postlethwaite**  
Assistant Catering Manager **Dan Walsh**  
Catering Supervisor **Marketa Chalupova**  
Catering Supervisor **Cameron O'Neill**  
Catering Supervisor **Abbie Tovey**  
Catering Supervisor **Kay Tuddenham**  
Kitchen Supervisor **Sonya McEnery**  
Kitchen Assistant **Heather Patrick**  
Kitchen Assistant **Harrison Joseph**  
Catering Assistant **Hayley Biggerstaff**  
Catering Assistant **Ayanna Campbell**  
Catering Assistant **Caitlin Cronin**  
Catering Assistant **Max George**  
Catering Assistant **Rupert Grainger**  
Catering Assistant **Gemma Grantham**  
Catering Assistant **Caleb Griggs-Taylor**  
Catering Assistant **Colleen Hedley**  
Catering Assistant **Jenny Knight**  
Catering Assistant **Marcel Krol**  
Catering Assistant **Olalanrewaju Lanre Kuku**  
Catering Assistant **Natalie Layng**

Catering Assistant **Isabella McDonald**  
Catering Assistant **Maddie McEwen**  
Catering Assistant **Takudzwa Mudiwa**  
Catering Assistant **Cecile Oppliger**  
Catering Assistant **Elizabeth Rhee**  
Catering Assistant **Ena Rose Baker**  
Catering Assistant **Zuzanna Sienkiewicz**  
Catering Assistant **Oliwia Szydlowska**  
Catering Assistant **Isabel Tovey**  
Catering Assistant **Pheobe Tuddenham**

## Creative Associates

Set/Costume Trainee **Kritika Agarwal**  
Sound Trainee **Jasraj Sahota**

## Finance Team

Management Accountant **Hugh Lassey**  
Management Accountant **Justyna Potrebko**  
Accounts Officer **Renata Boba-Gilsenan**

## Marketing, Development and Box Office Team

Deputy Communications Manager **Emma Rowan**  
Development Consultant **Helen Hotchkiss**  
Development Officer **Amelia Barry**  
Social Media & Content Officer **Guneet Takhar**  
Marketing Officer **Jodie Gillies**  
Marketing & Communications Assistant **Sophia Bengtsson-Wheeler**  
Box Office & Sales Manager **Sarah Benn**  
Senior Box Office/Sales Assistant **Siobhan Twomey**  
Box Office Assistant **Charles Bloch**  
Box Office Assistant **Divya Konda**  
Box Office Assistant **Rhianna Morris**  
Box Office Assistant **Nicci Selby**  
Box Office Assistant/Usher **Sachin Sharma**  
Box Office Assistant **Ollie Watson**  
Box Office Assistant/Usher **Lisa Woodford**  
Box Office/Operations Assistant **Paul Yates**

## Operations Team

Front of House Operations Manager **Emma Kitson**  
Deputy Front of House Operations Manager **Eamonn Finnerty**  
Duty Manager **Joy Clayton**  
Duty Manager **Tom Simkins**  
Relief Duty Manager/Usher **Joanna Griggs**  
Operations Supervisor/ Duty Manager/ BTS Administrator **Robyn Clements**  
Commercial/Operations Support Officer **Richard Boland**  
Maintenance Assistant **Steve Clements**  
Usher **Matthew Broomfield**  
Usher **Mary Courtney**  
Usher **Megan Donnachie**  
Usher **Joanne Foley**  
Usher **Lisa Gaunt**  
Usher **Alex George**  
Usher **Malachi Griggs-Taylor**  
Usher **Cerys Harbour**  
Usher **Eva Heffernan**  
Usher **Andy Hockley**  
Usher **Kerry Horner**  
Usher **Sokina Jospeh**  
Usher **Linda Leech**  
Usher **Anna Lewis**  
Usher **Libby McLatchy**  
Usher **Eleanor Parker**  
Usher **Anjali Prashar**  
Usher **Ryan Slade**  
Usher **Michelle Stones**  
Usher **Hannah Tanner**  
Usher **Carol Williams**  
Usher **Brian Worthington**  
Front of House Volunteer **Narinder Chana**  
Front of House Volunteer **Alex John**  
Front of House Volunteer **Nina Shepherd**  
Front of House Volunteer **Charlie Steninger**  
Front of House Volunteer **Sarah Wood**

## Producing Team

Producer **Laura Blackley**  
Assistant Producer **Charlotte Titcombe**  
Education & Young People's Producer **Claire Procter**  
Education & Young People's Co-ordinator **Jess Trodden**  
Digital Producer **Simone Herbert**  
Embedded Community Producer **Joelle Ikwa**  
Programme Manager **Jonny McClean**  
Programme Coordinator **Emma Worrall**  
Creative Facilitator **Katherine Allen**

## Production and Technical Team

Acting Technical Manager **Kat Hodgson**  
Senior Technician **Adam Warren**  
Production and Building Maintenance Officer **Sharon Barriscale**  
Assistant Technician **Freya Carey Wood**  
Assistant Technician **Izzy Porter**  
Assistant Technician **Jason Sylvester**

## Wardrobe Team

Costume Supervisor **Naomi Thompson**  
Costume Alterations **Isabel Cope**  
Wardrobe Maintenance **Tabetha Moss**  
Dresser **Megan Goodearl**  
Dresser **Elizabeth Rowentree**  
Work Placement **Amena Couki**  
Work Placement **Chloe McConnell**  
Work Placement Student (BOA Performing Arts Academy) **Eden Dowling**  
Work Placement Student (BOA Performing Arts Academy) **Chevron Miller-Warren**  
Work Placement Student (BOA Performing Arts Academy) **Charlotte Winspear**

## Springboard Companies

**Blindspot Theatre**  
**Dauntless Evolution**  
**That's A Rap**

*The Belgrade Springboard Initiative is a Belgrade scheme to support emerging artists through providing training opportunities, organisational development and assistance in developing productions for the stage. We place a particular emphasis on supporting artists and companies from backgrounds that are under-represented in the industry.*

## Belgrade Theatre Enterprises Ltd

**Derek Barnes**  
**Laura Elliot**  
**Charnjit Saranna**  
**Julie White**



### Ramps on the Moon

*The Belgrade is currently working with Ramps on the Moon to embed anti-ableism into our programme, enriching the stories we tell and the way we tell them. With their support, we are striving to normalise the presence of Deaf and Disabled people in theatre, both on and off stage.*

# BELGRADE THEATRE

The Gate Theatre and  
Belgrade Theatre Coventry present

# POOR

by Katriona O'Sullivan  
Adapted by Sonya Kelly

Directed by  
Róisín McBrinn



THE  
**BELGRADE  
THEATRE**  
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THEATRE  
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People-led theatre. Powered by the community. Made possible by you.



# A Stage For All

You are at the heart of **A Stage for All**. You can turn local stories into extraordinary theatre, celebrate your community and amplify Coventry's diverse voices.

Together, we'll create theatre that inspires, educates and transforms. Join our journey and make every story count - because it starts with you.

Share the story. Shape the stage. Support **A Stage for All**.

Scan here to donate.



Credit: Nicola Young



Be inspired. Be carried away. Belong.

# Be a Belgrade Member

Want priority booking , plus discounts on tickets and food and drink?

Of course you do!

All that and more can be yours with a Belgrade membership from just £35.



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start saving.



Credit: Mike Baker

