

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



**SHEFFIELD
THEATRES**

The Generate Programme

**National
Theatre**

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



Utopia Theatre CIO is a Registered Charity No 1192008

programme design & print **JOHN
GOOD** www.johngood.com

CAST

Gboun-Gboun, Spy, Soldier
Opaleye / Kundu
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

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 Kablinović, 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

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

ACCESS PERFORMANCES

By Irmina St Catherine

Signed performance

Fri 14 Feb 2pm

IN REHEARSAL

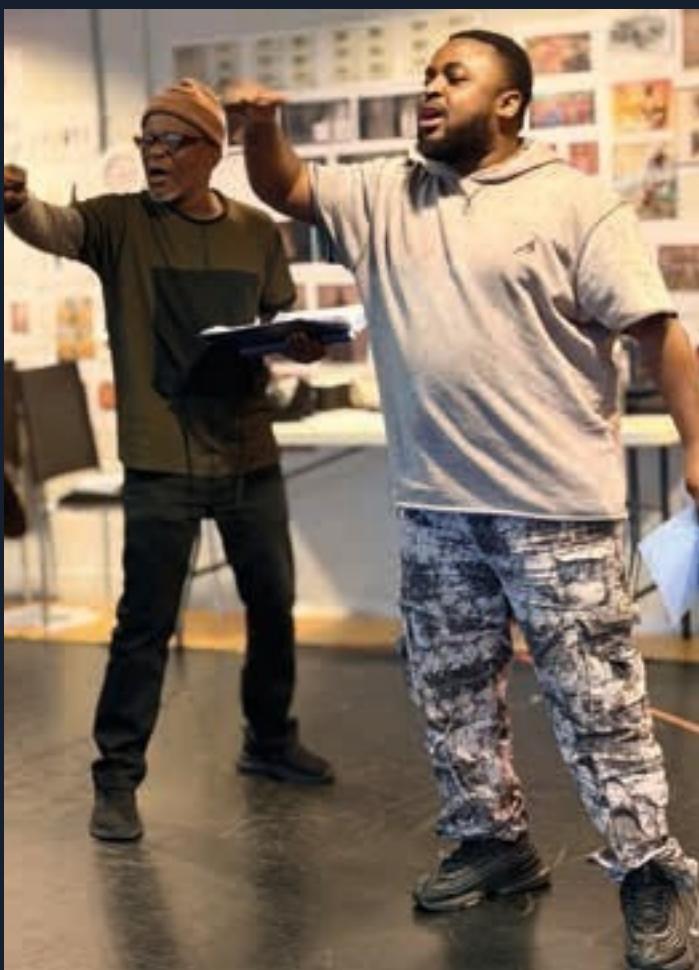
Rehearsal photography by **DivaCreative**



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 lle-lfe

Scene 16

The same day, night. Iyanifa's shrine

Scene 17

Two weeks later. The two war camps

Scene 18

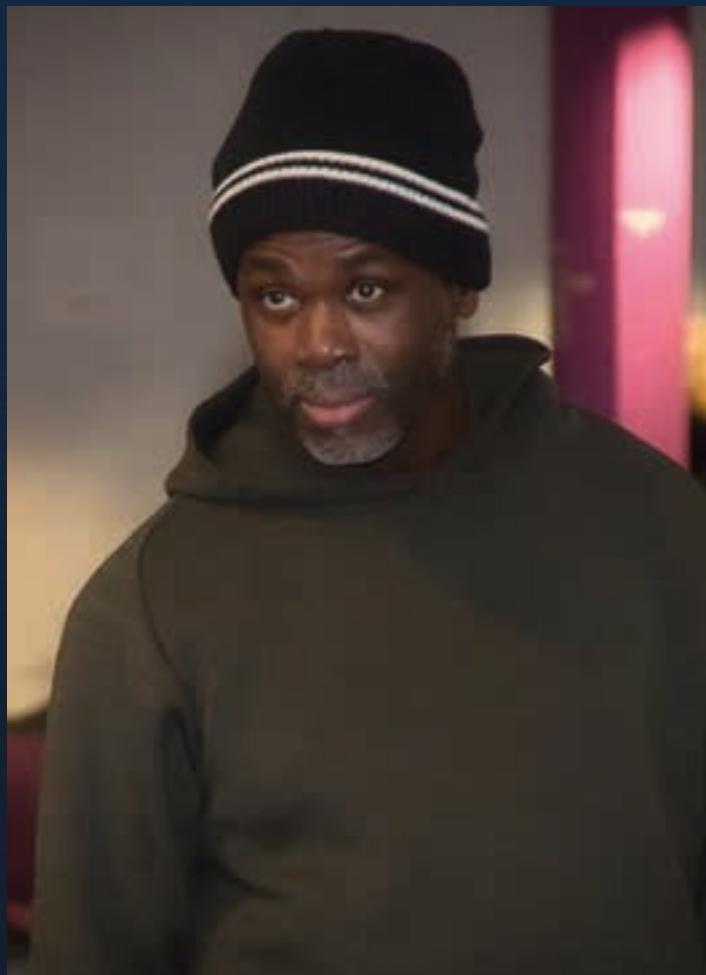
The same day. The battle



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 Aderemini's rise in the play.

MASS DISPLACEMENT

Wars caused massive migration, creating new settlements and social friction. In **Crown of Blood**, Oyebisi'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 YORÙBÁ 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 n 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: Courthistorian; 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 Ikejí 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.

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.



TUNJI FALANA AFILAKA, SERIKI OGEDENGBE AND 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.



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.



PATRICE NAIAMBANA IWALAGBA, ÈSÙ

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



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),

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.



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*.



ADENIYI OLUSOLA MOROLAHUN AYAN, AHSABI, AYEBAMI, KING'S MASQUERADE

Known professionally as EyinjuOladumare, 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 Art, 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.



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.



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.



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.

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 ask: 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

Founder, CEO & Artistic Director

Mojisola Kareem

Deputy Artistic Director

Mo Korede

Participation Manager

Bola Akanbi

Reception / Administration

Lauren MacDonald

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)

Bokey 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 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.UTOPIATHEATRE.CO.UK TO FIND OUT MORE

Staff

Board of Directors

Jonathan Neelands (Chair)	Peter Male
Annette Hay (Vice Chair)	Kerry Radden
Harry Banga	Thanh Sinden
Colin Bell	Karamjit Singh
Jacqui Clements	Tony Skipper
Rosalyn Forbes	Anjula Thiru
Robin Heer	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
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Belgrade Theatre Scenery

Head of Paintshop	Claire Winfield
Head of Construction	Steve Heir
Deputy Head of Paintshop	Katie Skeys
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 Opplicher
Catering Assistant	Elizabeth Rhee
Catering Assistant	Ena Rose Baker
Catering Assistant	Zuzanna Sienkiewicz
Catering Assistant	Olivia Szydłowska
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 Rowntree
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
COVENTRY

arts
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england
funding
theatre

dtf DUBLIN
THEATRE
FESTIVAL

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



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