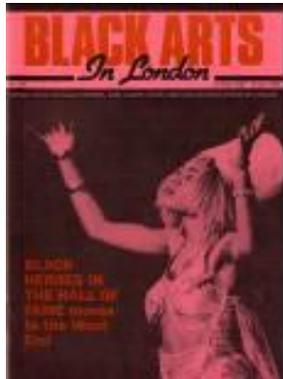
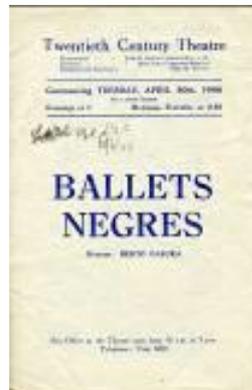


## Black Arts



Ref. Ephemera/370



Ref. Ephemera/137



Ref. COLETAY/2

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## Background

Every year, on the weekend of the August Bank Holiday the streets of Notting Hill come alive with an expression of Black culture through the Notting Hill Carnival. Although the origins of the Notting Hill Carnival are debated; it is certain that during its c. fifty years in existence it has come to be a highlight in the British cultural calendar, drawing annual crowds of over one million people.

Carnival is an art form in its own right, but one that blends music, dance and theatricality that is rooted in the culture of the Diaspora. The Notting Hill Carnival also has its origins in a community endeavour; one that is based in and serves the community, but that also acts as an entry point into Black culture.

The racism experienced by many immigrants led to the development of Black communities; both in the sense of a geographical location and also of united interests and shared experiences. The emergence of Black communities led to the fostering of new identities and forms of art, in part found in the shared cultures of the Caribbean and Africa and in part as a counter balance to the dominant, white culture.

During the 1970's there was a re-emergence of many community based dance and theatre groups, but they struggled to find funding and to professionalise. This led to a catch-22 situation as the funding bodies had limited money to fund these community based arts group, but without the funding these groups were unable to get the experience they needed in order to develop and professionalise.

The problem facing Black theatre companies was the lack of opportunities in the main stream for actors to gain experience, apart from a few stock roles or bit-parts. This also affected theatre productions as actors may drop out of plays if offered more lucrative or prestigious parts. The

# Subject Guide



lack of expertise and funding also had an impact on the quality of productions, ranging from the technical side such as lighting to the quality of the venue itself.

The lack of actors visible on stage and screen also offered few role models for Black children and young people to aspire to.

These difficulties also affected dance companies as there was no professional outlet for Black dancers. Prior to the 1970's most dancers operated on a freelance basis, but during the 1970's there was a move to form more organised companies. However, many of these groups lacked space for rehearsal. As with Black theatre, this led to a dearth of trained dance teachers and few role models for aspiring dancers to emulate.

The lack of funding and opportunities was highlighted in '*The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain*' (Naseem Khan, 1976) and the proposal to remedy this was the setting up of Black only dance and theatre companies to provide these opportunities. This report led to the development of a number of conferences and the setting up of the Minority Arts and Advisory Service (MAAS). The main aims of the organisation were to maintain registers of artists, give advice to artists and arts organisations, and publicise activities. MAAS started as a very small operation in 1976, and became an official legal entity in January 1977. It was initially funded by the ACGB, Gulbenkian Foundation and Marks & Spencer. It ceased to operate due to insufficient funding.

Culturally and politically, Black artistic forms were used as a way of affirming identities and creating a space and to articulate and explore issues around society, nationality and culture.

**For information on Black Publishing please [click here](#).**

## Brief overview of some key dates

1946	<p>Les Ballets Negres and its leader and choreographer Berto Pasuka (Wilbert Passley) opened for their first season at Twentieth Century Theatre in London.</p> <p>The company operated between 1946- 1953.</p>
1959	<p>Following the uprisings in Notting Hill and Nottingham, Claudia Jones organised a carnival in St. Pancras town hall as a showcase of Caribbean talent and to hopefully act as a bridge between communities.</p>
1966	<p>Although there is debate around the Notting Hill Carnival, the first outdoor Carnival in Notting Hill was organised in 1966. This Carnival was not focussed solely on the Caribbean community in Notting Hill and so performers also included Irish and Asian performers.</p> <p>The Caribbean Artists' Movement is officially formed, although Caribbean arts had already been established in the UK. The movement grew out of the disaffection of Black artists and intellectuals and who wanted to create art forms not tied to Europe.</p>
1973	<p>The economic climate of the 1970's also led to increased racial tension. The organisers of the 1973 Carnival shifted the focus to mirror the carnival of Trinidad and Tobago.</p>
Mid-1970's	<p>A gearshift in Black dance development, moving away from the freelance dancer to organised group performances.</p>
1976	<p>The publication of <i>'The Arts Britain Ignores'</i> which looked at the funding situation affecting Black and Ethnic Minority communities.</p> <p>This led to the establishment of the Minority Arts Advisory Service (MAAS). Through their research work MAAS aimed to discover the kind of arts activities taking place in different ethnic minority communities and signpost to funders. MAAS also published <i>Echo</i>, which later became <i>Artrage</i>.</p> <p>MAAS closed in 1995 due to financial constraints.</p>
1977	<p>The formation of MAAS Movers, which fused classical ballet, contemporary jazz and African-Caribbean dance. MAAS Movers disbanded in 1979 due to insufficient funding and a dispute over identity.</p> <p>The Visiting Arts Unit was set up with grants from the British Council, the Arts Council of</p>

	Great Britain, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Gulbenkian Foundation. It was set up to increase cultural links between the United Kingdom and other countries worldwide.
1979	The Black Theatre Co-operative is founded by Mustapha Matura and Charlie Hanson to produce Black theatre. The Black Theatre Co-operative is one of a core of a professionally recognised theatre companies.
1984	'Into the Open', an exhibition held in Sheffield and the first national exhibition of Black artists in Britain.
1985	<p>The Black Theatre Forum is established as an umbrella organisation of African Caribbean and Asian theatre companies. The aims of the Forum were to stimulate the development of Black theatre in Britain and to attract wider audiences. Due to lack of funds, the Black Theatre Forum ceased to operate in 2001.</p> <p>The Black Arts Alliance is established to deliver arts projects, performances, exhibitions, seminars and conferences.</p> <p>The publication of '<i>The Arts of Ethnic Minorities – Status and Funding</i>'. The follow-up to '<i>The Arts Britain Ignores</i>', this book highlighted the continued underfunding for Black arts organisations.</p>
c. 1990	The Regional Arts Boards are encouraged to prioritise cultural diversity and access to arts.

## Collections

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Ref. EPHEMERA/207  
© Movement Angol



Ref. EPHEMERA/207  
© Vokani Film Circuit



Ref. RC/PERIODICALS/26  
© MAAS

### 3.1 Ephemera (Ref. EPHEMERA)

Within the Ephemera collection there are a large number of leaflets and posters relating to arts events. BCA holds a particularly large array of theatre posters from the 1970's to the present day. The Ephemera collection also contains posters also related to dance, music and festivals. Most of the material within the Ephemera collection is organised according to subject, particularly **EPHEMERA/207** 'Social and Arts Events' and **EPHEMERA/211** 'Posters relating to the Arts.'

### 3.2 The papers of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (Ref. COLETAY)

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912), composer, was born on 15 August 1875 in Holborn, London. His mother, Alice raised her son in Croydon. Coleridge Taylor was given a violin at a young age, and in 1890 was sponsored to study at the Royal College of Music studying composition under Charles Villiers Stanford. His works were presented at college concerts and Coleridge-Taylor's Five Anthems were published in 1892. Coleridge-Taylor died of pneumonia at his home on 1 September 1912.

BCA holds sheet music (**COLETAY/1**) and reference material (**COLETAY/3**).

### 3.3 Black Cultural Archives papers (Ref. BCA)

BCA's own organisational papers contain research information on aspects of Black arts, including dance (**BCA/5/19**) and theatre (**BCA/5/1/89**).

BCA also holds records relating to the organisation of 'Black in the British Frame' (**BCA/7/6/12**) and accompanying tapes (**RECORD/63**).

### 3.4 Periodicals

BCA holds a large collection of publications and periodicals which feature national and grassroots publications. This series features over 100 periodical titles from BCA's collection and the Runnymede collection.

#### Periodicals

Periodicals of particular interest from BCA's collection are:

**PERIODICALS/28:** *Afro-Caribbean Post*

**PERIODICALS/37:** *Root*

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**PERIODICALS/96:** *Art Attack*

**PERIODICALS/112:** *Frontline*

We also have a large collection of single issues of publications, including some rare and one-off issues. (**Periodicals/124-130**).

## **Runnymede (ref. RC/PERIODICALS)**

The Runnymede Periodicals collection also holds a wide range of periodicals which shows the variety of issues and interest within the community, for example *Artrage* (**RC/PERIODICALS/26**), *Black Arts* (**RC/PERIODICALS/38**) and *Black Eye* (**RC/PERIODICALS/41**).

### **3.5 Records of Minority Arts Advisory Services (Ref. MAAS)**

The Minority Arts Advisory Service came into existence as a result of meetings that were held for a report titled "The Arts Britain Ignores", by Naseem Khan, published in 1976. The main aims of the organisation were to maintain registers of artists, give advice to artists and arts organisations, and publicise activities. MAAS started as a very small operation in 1976, and became an official legal entity in January 1977. It was initially funded by the ACGB, Gulbenkian Foundation and Marks & Spencer. It ceased to operate due to insufficient funding.

In addition to holding copies of *Artrage* (please see **3.1**), BCA also holds Annual Reports from 1977-1985 (**MAAS/2**) and documents relating to the contributions to *Artrage* (**MAAS/7-10**).

### **3.6 The Papers of Community Roots (Ref. COMROOTS)**

The Community Roots Trust (CRT) was set up in 1977. The charity had the aim to improve the management and service delivery of community self-help projects with particular reference to the needs of ethnic minority communities. The organisation operated at a national level and had units based in London, Birmingham, Wolverhampton and High Wycombe.

The records BCA holds particularly relate to the arts (**COMMROOTS/1/8**), and the community arts (**COMMROOTS/1/13** and **COMMROOTS/1/14**).

### **3.7 The papers of Gordon de la Mothe (Ref. MOTHE)**

Gordon de la Mothe was born in Carriacou in Grenada in 1933. In 1958 he moved to England where after working in a factory as a labourer studied Art first at Luton College of Art (1967-69) before gaining a diploma in Art and Design at Maidstone College of Art and an Art Teachers diploma at the University of Liverpool. He then became an art teacher.

Whilst operating as an art teacher, de la Mothe was an active artist producing a number of works that were exhibited between (1974-1990) at the: New English Art Club, Tower Gallery, Royal Academy, Royal Society of British Artists and the Black Arts Gallery.

De la Mothe has also written on Black representation in art in 1993 he published 'Reconstructing the Black Image'.

BCA holds papers relating to de la Mothe's work (**MOTHE/1**) and prints of his work (**MOTHE/2**).

## **3.8 The papers of Cultural Exchange Through Theatre in Education (CETTIE)**

In 2011 BCA received the papers of CETTIE. CETTIE is a registered Charity and since 1987 has been working with schools, libraries, theatres, and community venues. Their aim is to promote equal opportunities for development. CETTIE links culture, interaction and education in a dynamic vision and process.

This collection is currently uncatalogued but can be accessed at the premises of BCA.

## **3.9 The papers of Anton Phillips**

In 2009 BCA received the papers of Anton Phillips. Phillips was born in Jamaica and moved to Great Britain in the 1960s. Throughout his professional life, Phillips has been working to promote Black theatre, including his involvement with the Carib Theatre Company, the Black Theatre Season and the Black Theatre Forum.

The collection is currently uncatalogued but contains correspondence, ephemera, drafts and press cuttings. This collection can be accessed at the premises of BCA.

## Further Reading

### Books used to compile this subject guide:

- *The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities*. Naseem Khan (London, 1976).
- *The Arts of Ethnic Minorities: Status and Funding*. Walter V. Baker (London, 1985)
- *Behind the Masquerade: The story of Notting Hill Carnival*. Kwesi Owusu and Jacob Ross. (London, 1988).
- *The Oxford Companion to Black British History*. David Dabydeen, John Gilmore and Cecily Jones eds, (Oxford University Press, 2007) *There ain't no Black in the Union Jack*.

### Books available elsewhere:

- *Black in the British Frame: Black People in British Film and Television*, Bourne, S. (London, 1996).

## Other Sources

African and Asian Visual Arts Archive (AAVAA), available at <http://www.vads.ac.uk/collections/AAVAA.html>

Autograph, available at: [http://www.autograph-abp.co.uk/C.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=ABP\\_61](http://www.autograph-abp.co.uk/C.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=ABP_61)

British Film Institute, particularly Black Britain: available at: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/archive-collections/introduction-bfi-collections/bfi-mediathèques/black-britain> and The Black Power Mixtape, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/news/fight-rights-will-power-black-power-mixtape-1967-1975>.

Future Histories, available at: <http://www.futurehistories.org.uk/>.

Minority Arts Advisory Service (at University of Warwick): <http://dscalm.warwick.ac.uk/Dserve/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqCmd=NaviTree.tcl&dsqField=RefNo&dsqItem=MAA#HERE>

Rukus! Federation, based at the London Metropolitan Archives, available at: <http://rukus.org.uk/introduction/>.

The Association of Dance of the African Diaspora in Britain (ADAD) <http://www.adad.org.uk/metadot/index.pl?id=23266>

University of Surrey, National Resource Centre for Dance available at: <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/library/nrcd/archives/index.htm>

V&A, Black Theatre and Performance, available at: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/b/black-theatre-and-performance/>

The Papers of the Arts Council, available at: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/wid/ead/acqb/acqbf.html>