



Sancho: An Act of Remembrance

by Paterson Joseph

Author and Performer **Paterson Joseph**

Co-Director **Simon Godwin**

Set Design **Michael Vale**

Music Arrangement and Sound Design **Ben Park**

Lighting Design **Lucrecia Briceno**

Costume Design **Linda Haysman**

Associate Lighting Design **Anshuman Bhatia**

Production Stage Manager **Pamela Salling**

Assistant Director **Anna Girvan**

Design Assistant **Sarah June Mills**

Producers **Pemberley Productions and Oxford Playhouse**

Violin **Buffy North**

Viola **Phil Brown**

Cello **Rebecca Jordan**

Bass, Harpsichord **Ben Park**

Almost all the music heard in this production was originally composed by Charles Ignatius Sancho.

PROGRAM

There will be no intermission.

Friday, April 13 @ 7:30 PM

Saturday, April 14 @ 2 PM

Saturday, April 14 @ 8 PM

Harold Prince Theatre

Sancho: An Act of Remembrance was originally commissioned by the Oxford Playhouse in 2011. This production of *Sancho: An Act of Remembrance* had its first performance at the Oxford Playhouse on Thursday, September 17, 2015.

This production of *Sancho* is supported by the Arts Council of England under their Grants for the Arts Scheme. The producers wish to acknowledge the help and support of The October Gallery, London and Actors Equity Association.

PROGRAM NOTES

I had never heard of the subject of my play until I discovered Thomas Gainsborough's portrait of the extraordinary Charles Ignatius Sancho, in a book by historian Gretchen Gerzina, *Black England*. The most remarkable thing about this discovery is not that most people hadn't a clue about such an amazing pioneer of multi-ethnic Britain, but that I, a Black Briton, had no clue either. Truth is, I had presumed that the presence of Black People in Britain began in 1948 with the 249 passengers (and 1 stowaway) on board the ship, HMT Empire Windrush, when it docked at Tilbury from Montego Bay, Jamaica. Any previous dealings blacks had with the U.K. would have been remote, I had imagined: African slavery, Caribbean plantations, etc. But was that right?

In the early 2000's, I began a lengthy research period; hours, days, months, years trawling the archives for details about Black Britain. Most books I tackled were pretty dry. Heavy on facts, light on story. But with Ms. Gerzina's book, I discovered the joy of research. Her stories took me much further back than I could have imagined. My knowledge of Black Britain was transformed by my three-fold discoveries about the man baptized in 1729 by the Bishop of Cartagena, Columbia: Charles Ignatius.

First, Sancho's life was no *Roots*, nor was it a British version of *12 Years a Slave*. Charles Ignatius' journey was odder, more quirkily eccentric and subtle than the American models of slave life I'd been used to seeing and reading about. Second, Sancho was a 'victim' of the British gentry's love of 'exotica'. He was black, smart, humorous; he appealed to those who knew that Africans were not merely the 'beasts of burden' the slave traders portrayed them as. Third, he was an entertainer in a time of supreme entertainers; his best friends were the satirical, shaggy-dog tale author, Laurence Sterne; and the greatest actor of the 18th Century, David Garrick.

My final, pleasant shock of enlightenment was reading about the 'black frolics' and dances organized by the countless black servants, freemen and sailors all over London's parks. A community of souls who all knew the dangers for Africans in the world beyond the UK. They trod a careful path within these Isles to maintain both their freedom, and that of their, oftentimes white, spouses and mixed-heritage children. They may have been seen but they were seldom heard. Still, for them, being ignored meant being relatively safe from attack. Like their white, working-class friends and neighbors, they were shut out of political life, because you had to be a proprietor to register to vote. And very rare, maybe non-existent, was that working class worker who could afford to buy property.

It may be hard for some of us today to imagine a world where one is treated as a second class citizen, with little or no say in the running of one's own country. In England before the early 20th Century this was true for all women and the majority of men. Getting one's vote registered would become a burning goal for the working men and women of the U.K. for much of the 18th and 19th Centuries, and beyond. And Sancho would have been amongst that disenfranchised and dissatisfied throng. All this, a sobering reminder, if ever one was needed, never to abstain from voting!

One of the most heartening details uncovered in my studies was the natural solidarity between the white working-class and their African brothers and sisters; the former often rescuing and hiding slaves who had run away from cruel masters. A wonderful picture: Struggling brother aiding struggling brother. A historical fact the likes of UKIP [UK Independence Party] seem to have cynically forgotten.

Some of the stories I've come across are so domestic and modern they make me smile and shudder simultaneously. When Sancho's rather sketchy, and frankly racist, biographer, Joseph Jekyll, wrote that Sancho could have made an actor if not for a speech impediment, it sounded like something an agent might say to a black actor today after they'd auditioned

for the new Mr. Darcy: "Great audition, they loved you...but they're going another way..." The fact that Sancho's black skin had no part to play in his stymied acting career seems pretty unlikely to me. But perhaps it truly was the only obstacle and that, in fact, there were, as in the courts of Henry VIII and his daughter, Elizabeth I, black musicians and performers whose color was of little or no consequence to the majority of Britons in their day.

Through these years of research my ideas of British life and Black British contributions to it have been revolutionized. What I thought about multi-ethnic Britain pre-Windrush and what I now know has, for me, changed forever the meaning of the words, Black British. I now write them confidently, but with awareness of their resonance on every form that begs the question: Who Do You Think You Are? My humble hope is that this play will contribute a little to an understanding of our shared British history. Whoever we are.

- Paterson Joseph

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Paterson Joseph (Author and Performer)

Joseph has worked regularly at the National Theatre in London (*Whale, Saint Joan, Royal Hunt for the Sun, The Emperor Jones, Elmina's Kitchen*) and the Royal Shakespeare Company (*Julius Caesar* (seen at BAM in 2013), *Don Juan, Troilus and Cressida, Love's Labour's Lost, King Lear, The Pretenders*) as well as the Royal Exchange, Gate, Almeida and Young Vic Theatres. Television includes: *Timeless* (NBC), *You, Me and the Apocalypse* (NBC & Sky), *Safehouse* (ITV), *The Hollow Crown* (BBC & PBS), *The Leftovers* (HBO) and *Danny Boyle's Babylon*. Joseph is a season regular in *Timeless* and *Peep Show* and he has also appeared in *Doctor Who, Hustle, No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency* and *Rellik* (all BBC/HBO). *Sancho* marks Joseph's first play as a writer.

Simon Godwin (Co-Director)

Godwin's recent work includes *Measure of Measure* at Theatre for a New Audience; *The Cherry Orchard* at Roundabout Theater; *Strange Interlude, Man and Superman* and *The Beaux' Stratagem* at The National Theatre; and *Hamlet* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Between 2011 and 2013, he was Associate Director at the Royal Court, where he directed seven world premieres including *Routes, If You Don't Let Us Dream, NSFW, The Witness, Goodbye to All That, The Acid Test* and *Wanderlust*. Between 2009 and 2011, he was Associate Director of Bristol Old Vic, where he directed *The Little Mermaid, Krapp's Last Tape, A Kind of Alaska, Faith Healer* and *Far Away*. Godwin is an Associate Director of the National Theatre in London.

Michael Vale (Set Design)

Vale has designed the sets and costumes for over 200 theatre and opera productions both in the UK and abroad including those he has directed. Companies he has worked with include: The Royal Shakespeare Company; The National Theatre; The Royal Opera House; English National Opera; Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Opera North; English Touring Opera; De Vlaamse Opera, Antwerp; Los Angeles Opera; New Zealand International Art's Festival; Galaxy Theatre, Tokyo; Warsaw Globe Theatre Company; Munich Biennale; Lyric Hammersmith; The Royal Court; Almeida Theatre; Soho Theatre; Manchester Royal Exchange; Birmingham Rep.; West Yorkshire Playhouse; Sheffield Crucible; Northampton Theatre Royal; Liverpool Playhouse; Nottingham Playhouse; Bristol Old Vic; Plymouth Theatre Royal; Edinburgh Royal Lyceum; Bolton Octagon; Oldham Coliseum; Manchester Library Theatre; Salisbury Playhouse; Colchester Mercury Theatre; English Touring Theatre; The Royal Festival Hall; The Queen Elizabeth Hall; The Sage, Gateshead; Battersea Arts

Centre; Spymonkey; Kneehigh Theatre Company; and Told By An Idiot, with whom he is an Associate Idiot. His work has been nominated for two Olivier Awards; an *Irish Times* Theatre Award; a Manchester Evening News Theatre Award, a Charrington Fringe First Award and two Off West End Theatre Awards.

Ben Park (Composer and Sound Design)

Park has an extensive track record as a producer, collaborator, director, performer and educator. Originally, he performed as session saxophone player for bands such as Diesel Park West, the Escape Club, Lamb and Soul II Soul, to name but a few. He has written and performed for film, television and theatre, notably the OBI and *Time Out* multi-award winning *70 Hill Lane*, and the triple BAFTA winning, quadruple Emmy® winning, Oscar® nominated S4C production of *The Canterbury Tales*. His most recent film and album is the British comedy *Downhill*. Currently, he is devising his own stage show with writers Ian McMillan and Ed Harris, *-Our Father-*, directed by his longtime collaborator, Fin Walker, with whom he was artist in residence at the Royal Opera House for six years. He is also currently working on a commission from the Northern Sinfonia and a new dance film with Candoco Dance Company, as well as producing an album for the Danish fusion band *Groth Nordstrom*.

Lucrecia Briceno (Lighting Design)

Briceno is a Peruvian artist currently based in Brooklyn. Much of her work has been in association with artists developing innovative and original pieces. Her work includes theatre, dance, puppetry and opera, as well as collaborations in several non-performance projects. Her designs have been presented at venues such as Oxford Playhouse (UK), Arena Stage, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dallas Theatre Center, BAM Fischer, Kennedy Center, Berlind Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, La Mama ETC, Birmingham Repertory (UK), Culture Project, Pregones Theatre, Intar, HERE Arts Center, Soho Rep, Ohio Theatre, Irondale Center and ArtsEmerson, among many others. Internationally, her work has been produced or toured in Caracas, Peru, Turkey, Scotland, Seoul, Bogota, Norway and England. In 2015, her design work for *Crime and Punishment* was part of the Venezuelan presentation for the Prague Quadrennial. She is an Associate Artist with The Civilians and Resident Designer with Pregones Theatre/PRTT and One Eighth Theatre Company. Briceno has been a guest artist/lecturer at NYU, Princeton University, Hunter College and the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. MFA: NYU Tisch School of the Arts.

Anshuman Bhatia (Associate Lighting Design)

Bhatia designs for opera, theatre and dance have been seen at Beijing's National Center for the Performing Arts, Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Soho Rep, The Public, The Atlantic, Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., Dublin's Civic Theater, The Juilliard School, HERE Arts Center, LoftOpera, Ma-Yi Theater Company, Pacific Symphony, The Park Avenue Army, Bard Music Festival, Puerto Rican Traveling Theater, Virginia Arts Festival, Rattlestick Theater, Troy's EMPAC, Infinity Theater Company and The New School for Drama. Upcoming work can be seen at Madison Opera and Classic Stage Company. MFA: NYU. bhatiadesign.com

Linda Haysman (Costume Designer)

Haysman trained as a theatre designer at Central School of Art and Design. She specializes now in costume design and worked at the BBC covering a whole variety of shows from period dramas and plays to popular sitcoms. Her credits include: Feature films: *Delirium*, *The Black Prince*, *Sus*, *Niagara Motel*, *Urban Ghost Story* and *The Runner*. Television: *Not Even God is Wise Enough*, *Small Metal Jacket*, *Tales From Hollywood*, *Prisoners In Time*, *Out Of the Blue*, *Scene Dramas*, *A Few Short Journeys if the Heart*, *Low Level Panic*, *The Crouches*, *In Exile*, *Once Upon a Time in the North*, *May to December*, *Woodcock*, *Lenny*

Henry Gets Wild, East Enders, Scoop, The Story of Tracey Beaker, Megamaths, Hero to Zero, John Daniel and The Last African Flying Boat.

Anna Girvan (Assistant Director)

Girvan trained at Bristol Old Vic and is a Jerwood Assistant Director 2014/15 and Royal Shakespeare Company Creative Fellow. As a director, her work in theatre includes *Go Between, Someone Else* and *Room 503* at the Young Vic; *Welcome, Friend* at the Courtyard and *A Little Nonsense* at Edinburgh Fringe and Brighton Fringe; *Stuff* at the Bike Shed, Exeter; *Debris*; and *Contractions* at the Alma Tavern (also Trafalgar Studios 2). As assistant/associate director: *People Places and Things* for Headlong UK Tour; *Hamlet* and *King Lear* at Royal Shakespeare Company; *Richard II* at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre; *The Red Lion* at the National Theatre; *Happy Days* at the Young Vic; *The Lion King* at Bristol, Manchester and Birmingham UK tour venues; *A Voyage Round My Father* and *The Lady in the Van* at Salisbury Playhouse; *The Good Companions* at Bristol Old Vic Studio; and *Glengarry Glen Ross* at the Ustinov, Bath Theatre Royal.

Pamela Salling (Production Stage Manager)

Salling is a New York-based stage manager for theatre, dance and opera. Select NYC credits include *Répons, De Materie* and *tears become...streams become...* (Park Avenue Armory); *The Apple Family: Scenes from Life in the Country (That Hopey Changey Thing, Sweet and Sad, Sorry, and Regular Singing)*; *Othello, Into the Woods, The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs, Knickerbocker and Neighbors* (The Public Theater); *Blood Knot* (Signature Theatre Company); and *A Family for All Occasions, Thinner Than Water and Massacre (Sing to Your Children)* (Labyrinth Theater Company). Regional/European/Touring: *Hamlet* and *Love's Labor's Lost* (The Old Globe); *How to Be a Rock Critic* (ArtsEmerson); *Petrol Station* (The Kennedy Center); and extensive work with director Peter Sellars including his productions of *Lagrime di San Pietro, Kopernikus, Josephine Baker: A Portrait, The Gospel According to the Other Mary, St. Matthew Passion, Desdemona, Othello, The Winds of Destiny, A Flowering Tree* and *La Passion de Simone*.

Pemberley Productions (Producer)

Pemberley Productions is a company founded and run by Andrew D. Hamingson and Tim Smith. They are a producing company dedicated to bringing European drama to North America, and North American drama to Europe. Our previous projects include a national tour of the Royal Shakespeare Company/Filter Theatre production of *Twelfth Night*, a European tour of The Public Theater's *Apple Family Plays*, and an Irish tour of the American Players Theatre's production of James DeVita's *In Acting Shakespeare*. Pemberley has also co-produced the US tour of *Ensemble Basiani* from the Republic of Georgia in 2016, and general managed the US tour of Druid Theatre's *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. Additionally, Pemberley Productions is producing this second national tour of *Sancho: An Act of Remembrance* in the 17/18 season, and is general managing the national tour of Theatre De La Ville's *State of Siege* and the NY premiere of *Some Old Black Man* at 59E59 Theatres.

Oxford Playhouse (Producer)

Oxford Playhouse and its Burton Taylor Studio present and produce a wide range of live performance. The program includes the best of British and international drama, family shows, contemporary dance and music, student and amateur shows, comedy, lectures and poetry. The Playhouse has been presenting and creating all kinds of performance since 1938. It produces and tours its own shows, has acclaimed Shared Experience as its Resident Company, mentors emerging artists through the Evolve Artists in Residence program, and presents Playhouse Plays Out, an ongoing series of off-site events which take surprising theatre to unexpected places across the county. The learning team works with over 14,000 people each year through post-show discussions, workshops, work

experience, three resident young people's theatre companies and holiday workshops. The Playhouse also produces an annual pantomime. 2014/15's *Beauty And The Beast* was seen by 36,000 people. 2015 and 2016 saw more Oxford Playhouse productions on the main stage including *Sancho: An Act of Remembrance* and an exciting new production of *The Tempest*. Oxford Playhouse is thrilled to be co-producing this new run of *Sancho: An Act of Remembrance* and is excited as ever to see Paterson Joseph (a Playhouse Patron) back on the stage. oxfordplayhouse.com