



## KWAME NKRUMAH CHAIR IN AFRICAN STUDIES INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES

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### KWAME NKRUMAH PAN-AFRICAN INTELLECTUAL CULTURAL FESTIVAL

The Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, announces a bi-annual **Kwame Nkrumah Pan-African Intellectual Cultural Festival** to be organized under the auspices of the newly established **Kwame Nkrumah Chair in African Studies**, in honour of Nkrumah's dedication to a tradition of vigorous and liberating Africa-centred intellectual and cultural activity, such as was outlined in the major address he gave on the occasion of the formal opening in 1963 of the Institute of African Studies. Inspiration for such a festival comes from the example of the **Annual Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Intellectual Festival Week** of the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, under the auspices of the **Julius Nyerere Professorial Chair in Pan-African Studies**. Such a festival is certain to provide a critical impetus for the promotion of a major international dialogue on Pan-African thought and struggle. The University of Ghana, through the Kwame Nkrumah Chair, is in a very good position to not merely copy the good example of Dar es Salaam, but to draw on Ghana's multiple connections with the history of Pan-Africanism to fashion a unique programme of intellectual debate and other culturally enriching events that could easily and quickly grow into one of the most significant events on the University's calendar. Unlike the annual Dar es Salaam festival, the Legon festival is to be held once every two years. The idea is to devote each intervening year to finalizing publications and other products from each edition of the festival. This should also allow reasonable time for fund raising and careful planning. Every effort will be made to produce professional audio/video/photo/web-based documentations of each major event for eventual wider circulation.

The maiden edition of the **Kwame Nkrumah Pan-African Intellectual Cultural Festival** is to be held in September 2010, around the anniversary of Nkrumah's birthday. Core festival activities will include an international symposium as well as a cluster of other cultural events, such as film shows, literary readings/performances, dramatic musical, and film shows, as well as programmes specially designed for the education and enjoyment of young people. An outline of the two main components of the Festival is as follows:

### THE DREAM, THE REALITY: REASSESSMENTS OF AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE An International Symposium - September 27-29, 2010

**The Dream, The Reality: Re-assessments of African Independence**". This international symposium is to be held in Accra, Ghana, from 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2010. The symposium constitutes the central event in the inaugural issue of the Kwame Nkrumah Pan-African Intellectual & Cultural Festival Week. The symposium and the entire festival are being organised under the auspices of the Kwame Nkrumah Chair in African Studies as a major

collaboration between the Council for the Development of Social Science in Africa (CODESRIA), the Institute of African Studies-Legon, and the African Humanities Institute Programme, which is a CODESRIA institute based at the University of Ghana-Legon. The symposium aims at achieving the triple objective of commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Year of African Independence (1960-2010) while celebrating the Centenary Anniversary of the birth of Kwame Nkrumah (1909-2010); promoting an ongoing critical study of the contemporary condition of Africa; nurturing reflections on the future development of the continent.

CODESRIA, the Kwame Nkrumah Chair in African Studies, the Institute of African Studies, and the African Humanities Institute Programme of CODESRIA at Legon, invite social science and humanities scholars, artists, cultural and political activists to produce carefully thought-out papers for open discussion and debate in an international forum intended to be as critical and innovative as possible. It is proposed that a small number of invited papers will serve as lead presentations around which panels can address clearly defined issues of special historical significance and contemporary relevance.

This symposium is aimed at 'taking stock' of our growing knowledge base with respect to social, political, and cultural developments in African countries, directing a special focus on the place and role of African countries in the international arena. As several countries celebrate their 50th anniversary, it is important that the social sciences and the humanities re-examine where we are with our scientific knowledge and creative vision of African societies, as well as how influential this knowledge and vision could be for the future development of the continent. The symposium offers a forum where research and creative work in various fields can be presented, discussed and further developed to fill critical knowledge gaps with respect to African development in all its aspects. Symposium organisers are particularly interested in creative thinkers, researchers, research groups and networks studying African societies through comparative perspectives and from different theoretical and creative angles.

Participation costs of those whose papers are accepted for presentation will be covered fully or partially by CODESRIA.

#### OTHER FESTIVAL EVENTS:

- **THEATRE PERFORMANCES:**

- Efua Sutherland: **Foriwa** : This could have been another version of the old classic tale of the young maiden who refuses to marry the man chosen for her by her parents, and for her stubborn pride, comes to a sad end. But in the transforming imagination of Ghana's pioneer dramatist, Foriwa blooms into a young woman whose courage and vision bring exciting transformations into her community, through her loving partnership with the man of her own dreams, a stranger with knowledge and skills that introduce a new creative energy into the life of an old, almost stale community. **Foriwa**, ultimately, is the story of Ghana as a new nation at the crossroads of social transformation.
- Femi Osofisan: **Nkrumah-ni...Africa-ni!**  
"Thus, by a stange coincidence of history, three of the most radical African leaders lived together in this small town of Conakry for six full years! They met, according to reports, almost every day, to talk and work out the strategies for the full emancipation of Africa. But sadly, no record of their discussions exists.

Think of them however: one a leader fallen from power; another, struggling to remain in power; and the third, his life at stake, in the violent quest for power. All three were men of astounding visionary and oratorical power. All three were gifted with lucidity and courage, cunning and ruthlessness. All three possessed great natural charm and charisma, and a hatred of ostentation and cant, but with an unmistakable aura of command. Uncannily, their speeches read alike in several instances, like different modulations of the same voice!

What did these three remarkable figures discuss in those years? What, in their death has Africa lost – or gained?

- Directed by Femi Osofisan & Performed by Abibigromma, SPA – Legon.
- Mohammed ben-Abdallah: **The Fall of Kumbi**  
The grand wedding between the Prince of Audoghost and Zainata, a Tuareg Princess, is on the morrow. All is set for the grand celebrations, but the heart of the bride is with another Prince. The morning of the wedding breaks, but there is no bride. A Prince from a distant land, the land of the wealthy, proud and powerful Kumbi Saleh, has paid a visit when Audoghost is asleep. This is where the drama begins. As is to be expected of Abdallah, he makes full use of his poetic license and imaginatively reconstructs the fall of the ancient Ghana Empire, blending elements of religious ritual in a manner that delights and thrills audiences with the impact of its sheer theatricality. But above the drama and delightful and extravagant splendor of royal and religious zeal, the fall of Ancient Ghana holds important lessons and warnings for today's Ghana and Africa, hence the final repeated lines... *Remember! ... Remember!! ... Remember!!!...*
- Directed by Mohammed ben-Abdallah & Performed by the National Theatre Players.
- Kofi Anyidoho: **Children of the Land** and **Cosmic High Court (Poetry Dramatization)**
- **Children of the Land** : This is the story of African Liberations Struggle and the Independence Movement told through **poetry dramatization**. As we celebrate the Golden Jubilee of 1960 as 'the Year of African Independence', when close to twenty African States gained political independence from colonial rule, it is timely to bring back on stage this powerful and moving example of poetry as a dramatic experience. The performance-oriented structure of the poetic sequence makes provision for one child to represent each African state. For the sake of coherence and artistic balance, the various states are organized into five regions: Children of the Northern, Eastern, Western, Central and Southern Lands. In the full production and performance, each region comes on stage with a characteristic dance movement together with music appropriate to its cultural heritage, as they perform poetic lines that capture their political history and their land's natural heritage. Each child carries the national flag of the country she/he represents. It is deep joy to watch these children bring alive the tribulations of African independence struggle and the excitement that was the promise of African independence.
    - Directed by Kofi Anyidoho, Edward Appiah & F. Nii-Yartey. Choreography by F. Nii-Yartey, Bright Ofosu & Kofi Anyidoho. Performed by University of Ghana Basic Schools Pupils.
  - **Cosmic High Court** : The occasion is the death in a foreign land of Ghana's first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. There is a trial in which representative citizens speak to the issue of whether to bring his mortal remains home for a hero's burial. **Cosmic High Court** is an adaptation of the poem **In the High Court of Cosmic Justice** from Kofi Anyidoho's collection *Earth Child*(1985). The production is a mixed-media adaptation by Africanus Aveh combining screen art with live stage performance. The stage is an Afa Shrine with a High Priest in divination, supported by devotees, acolytes, drummers and dancers. Eight witnesses, originally shot at various locations, appear on a screen

mounted on stage. Their testimony is interspersed with invocations, drumming, singing and dancing on stage.

- Directed by Africanus Aveh & Performed by Obugacy Theatre Company.
- **Storytelling Performance** : To be enacted by performers from the Obodan and Kwesidoi Community, led by Queenmother Nana Aboa Oforiwa.
- **Dance Drama/Theatre Productions**::
  - Ghana Dance Ensemble: A Selection of Traditional & Pioneering Choreographic Pieces.
  - Dance Department, SPA: **The Future of Dance**
- **MUSICAL CONCERT**:
  - Traditional Music
  - Choral Music
  - Popular Music
- **FILM SCREENINGS**:
  - Kwaw Ansah: **Heritage Africa**  
 “Between director Kwaw Ansah and the practiced cinematography of Chris Hesse, there are moments of brilliant and technically polished camera-work...Kwaw Ansah’s **Heritage Africa** is a film to watch again and again. Mohammed ben-Abdallah may not have overstated his excitement over **Heritage Africa** when, in his speech at the premier in Accra, he concluded that the final battle for the liberation of Africa from her colonial legacy is to be staged on the cinema and video screen. **Heritage Africa** is clearly part of that battle.”
  - Stephanie Black: **Africa Unite**  
**AFRICA UNITE** by Stephanie Black (110 min., US, 2007)... has been hailed by critics as “a singular and masterfully executed film ... that is at once a concert tribute, Marley family travelogue, and humanitarian documentary, igniting the screen with the spirit of world-renowned reggae icon BOB MARLEY in its every frame. In commemoration of Bob’s 60th birthday, **Africa Unite** is centered on the Marleys’ first-time-ever family trip to Ethiopia in 2005.”
  - Stanley Nelson: **The Murder of Emmett Till**  
**THE MURDER OF EMMETT TILL** by Stanley Nelson, (52mins, USA 2003): “In August 1955, a fourteen-year-old black boy whistled at a white woman in a grocery store in Money, Mississippi. Emmett Till, a teen from Chicago, didn’t understand that he had broken the unwritten laws of the Jim Crow South until three days later when two white men dragged him from his bed in the dead of night, beat him brutally and then shot him in the head. ... This was one of the sparks that set the Civil Rights Movement in motion.”
  - Clairmont Chung: **W.A.R. Stories: Walter Anthony Rodney**  
 “This film covers the life of world-renowned historian, author and activist Dr. Walter Rodney, who was assassinated at age 38 on Friday, June 13, 1980, in his native Guyana. This is the story of a man who dedicated his life, and ultimately gave his life, to the struggle for equal rights and justice. He did so through his considerable intellectual gifts and actual grassroots involvement everywhere he went....we see the growth of his ideology and how that changed over the years from his coming of age in racially divided Guyana through the cold war, the Black Power Movement, Pan-

Africanism, Caribbean Independence, and the idea of self-emancipation...It's about the influence of places on him and him on places as is evidenced by 'the Rodney riots' of 1968 in Kingston, Jamaica, his role in Southern Africa's independence, and, finally, civil rebellion in Guyana where his life ended just a block from his birth-home. It's a film about us: all of us."

- Haile Gerima: **Sankofa**: As Haile Gerima defines it, the term **sankofa** means "to move forward, you must reclaim the past. In the past, you find the future and understand the present". In this light, a people's knowledge of their history is a source of strength and, especially for people of African descent, a necessary tool in the struggle to emancipate consciousness and reclaim humanity. Gerima believes that not only does history heal, but that "history is power". In the film *Sankofa*, the healing power of history is made clear in the character of Nunu. Unlike the other enslaved Africans on the Layfayette plantation, Nunu was born in Africa and has strong memories of African rituals and culture. These memories provide strength for Nunu and the other enslaved Africans that stand with her in the resistance movement. What dignity and salvation is to be had for Africans on the plantation comes largely as a result of Nunu's knowledge of the Motherland....It is those enslaved Africans that are estranged from Africa that suffer the most on the plantation.

- **QUIZ & DEBATE PROGRAMMES FOR SCHOOLS & UNIVERSITIES**

- **PHOTO & STAMP EXHIBITION :**

- **BOOK FAIR:**

**FESTIVAL PLANNING COMMITTEE:**

- Dr. Esi Sutherland-Addy, IAS, Committee Chair
- Prof. Kofi Anyidoho, IAS/English, Nkrumah Chair
- Prof. Helen Lauer, Philosophy
- Mr. Godwin Adjei, IAS
- Ms. Sarah Dorgbadzi, SPA
- Mr. Ben Ayettey, Ghana Dance Ensemble
- Mr. Africanus Aveh (Co-opted), Theatre Arts
- Johnny Apedoe, IAS. (Recorder)
- Mrs. Joyce Ahadome, IAS (Recorder)

**FESTIVAL ADDRESS:**

**KWAME NKURUMAH FESTIVAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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