



Consortium led by tiata fahodzi wins ACE Sustained Theatre Fund

A consortium led by tiata fahodzi has been awarded Arts Council England's Sustained Theatre Fund, designed to support the development of established and emerging Black and minority ethnic theatre makers and to increase their representation across the wider theatre sector.

There is a deficit of BAME leaders across the sector - the theatre industry is not providing the right training or transition opportunities for BAME directors and theatre makers so that they can demonstrate the experience to lead companies in these challenging times. A new approach is urgently needed and the consortium will take up the challenge of creating future BAME artistic leaders and avert the leadership crisis facing BAME-companies and beyond.

The four BAME-led theatre companies, working with professional development partners Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme (RTYDS) and ITC (Independent Theatre Council), all have a pledge to diversity, a strong track record of talent development and a commitment to BAME leadership. The companies are spread across the country: Freedom Studios (Bradford), 20 Stories High (Liverpool), tiata fahodzi (Watford) and Talawa Theatre Company (London).

The consortium is led by tiata fahodzi's artistic director Natalie Ibu who has a longstanding commitment to developing artists. At *tiata delights* festival at Watford Palace Theatre in 2015 the company provided a platform for British African talent and offered training workshops with dramaturg Ola Animashawun, director Gbolahan Obisesan and movement director Diane Alison Mitchell amongst others.

Natalie Ibu comments, *We believe that diversity starts at the top and we're delighted to be leading a consortium of committed partners to develop and make space for more diverse leaders. Diversity is in the DNA of the consortium partners - each doing incredible work to make sure that the depth of BAME experiences are richly told for all audiences - so it's thrilling to be*

awarded the resources to make more impact and bring about real tangible change for ourselves, each other and the wider sector.

The consortium will equip a broad network of BAME directors and theatre makers with the skills, confidence and connections to successfully apply for leadership positions and take their place as leaders across the country, ensuring that our buildings truly look and feel like the streets they sit on.

Their work will include initiatives such as Leaders of Tomorrow and the Trainee Artistic Director scheme.

Leaders of Tomorrow will be a community of experienced BAME theatre practitioners with ambitions to lead a theatre company. The group of experienced BAME practitioners will receive bespoke leadership training and a series of workshops by leading theatre practitioners.

Each partner company will host a Trainee Artistic Director (TAD) for two years; they will work closely with the Artistic Director, participating in the daily business of running a theatre company and gaining senior management experience as well insight into all facets of the role. During this time, the TAD will commission or acquire rights to a piece of work, seek co-production partners, fundraise, assemble a creative team, book a tour and direct a piece of work.

All the schemes run by the consortium will offer mentorship, placements and the increased capacity for talent development. Through working collaboratively on professional development such as this, the BAME and wider theatre sector will be strengthened by the creation of a skilled BAME leadership talent pool.

The pioneering work of the consortium is important and much-needed in our current climate to ensure that Black and minority ethnic theatre makers are properly represented across the whole industry.

Notes to Editors

tiata fahodzi

The consortium is led by tiata fahodzi's artistic director Natalie Ibu who has a longstanding commitment to developing artists. Prior to leading tiata fahodzi she devised and launched In Good Company, the artist development scheme for the East Midlands and ran HighTide Festival

Theatre's artist development initiative, Genesis Laboratory. In 2014, Natalie Ibu became tiata fahodzi's third artistic director and with her came a question: what does it mean to be of African heritage but of mixed experience? Since then, tiata continue to reflect the changing and developing diaspora with a particular interest in the dual and the in-between, in those who straddle worlds, cultures, languages, classes, heritages, races and struggles. Their vision sees them embrace the multiple in all ways - narrative, form, experience, identity, scale - in order to continue to boldly interrogate what it means to be a British African today. Their work starts with the contemporary British African experience but reaches beyond to ask, everyone, what does it mean to be a contemporary Briton now. Past productions include bricks and pieces by award-winning Charlene James, i know all the secrets in my world and belong by award-winning Bola Agbaje. Patrons include Lenny Henry and Danny Sapani.

For more information, see www.tiatafahodzi.com.

20 Stories High

20 Stories High has a strong track record of developing young theatre makers through its core programme that works with around 50 young artists a year. They host student placements, work experience and train young people as facilitators. Their professional development pathways have led to employment for participants as actors, (on tours of Headz, Tales from the MP3 and Black) and stage managers for national tours.

Julia Samuels, Co-Artistic Director of 20 Stories High, comments, We are so excited to be involved in this project. We are passionate about ensuring the theatre sector becomes more culturally diverse, and the Sustained project gives us an incredibly valuable opportunity to do something at a structural level. At 20 Stories High, we are looking forward to have a Trainee Artistic Director join the staff team. It will allow us to enhance our programme, reach new young people, share our learning, as well as to be inspired in new ways by having a brand new member of the artistic team. And by sharing this opportunity with such brilliant partners, we can together make a significant contribution to the training and development of culturally diverse arts leaders of the future.

For more information, see www.20storieshigh.org.uk.

Freedom Studios

Freedom Studios artistic development programmes for emerging talent includes Street Voices for writers, an Associate Artist programme and the Freedom To network. Over the next three

years they will develop this work in collaboration with Bradford Council, young people and schools in Bradford. They also offer professional opportunities for public performance, and workshops for young people in schools and community settings.

Aisha Khan and Alex Chisholm, Co-Artistic Directors of Freedom Studios comment, *Freedom Studios, comments, Freedom Studios is thrilled to be part of the Sustained programme, with such inspiring partners. All our work is about creating opportunities and development through theatre, enabling the diverse artists and artistic communities of the future. We look forward to nurturing the next generation of BAME arts leaders.*

For more information, see www.freedomstudios.co.uk.

Talawa Theatre Company

Talawa has a long history of developing Black artists and is recognised as having the know-how and commitment to unlock artists' potential through a broad offer for emerging and established artists of all ages including: a free to use Script Reading Service, training Black script readers, Talawa Firsts – an annual festival of new writing. Studio Firsts – three week-long slots given to theatre-makers to develop new work. TYPT – a four-week intensive collaboration between with emerging artists and a professional creative team, and Creating Routes which trains facilitators in partnership with Emergency Exit Arts and Goldsmiths, University of London.

Michael Buffong, Artistic Director, Talawa Theatre Company comments, *Talawa is 30 this year, and in those 30 years we have realised the big question at hand is less about casting, it's about who decides what's put on stage. Within the established UK theatre ecosystem, lasting change can only come from the top. To achieve lasting change means putting in place different ways of looking at the world from the top - changing who runs and programmes what's on in British theatres. It's about the gate-keepers and the decisions they make. With the Sustained Theatre award we'll start to change the future leadership of the sector.*

For more information, see www.talawa.com.

Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme

RTYDS is a professional development programme for new and emerging directors. RTYDS has helped launch the careers of many leading Artistic Directors, Rupert Goold (Almeida), Lorne Campbell (Northern Stage), Elizabeth Newman (Octagon Theatre) Matthew Xia (Manchester Royal Exchange) and Natalie Ibu (Tiata Fahodzi). For over 50 years, the scheme has placed

emerging directors in major regional theatres around the country, giving them the opportunity to develop skills as directors and also, crucially, as artistic leaders. In 2014 RTYDS introduced two new strands to the programme with a focus on directors from under-represented communities. RTYDS has extensive experience of re-shaping recruitment processes to achieve diverse results and in the last two years 47% of participants were BAME.

Sue Emmas, Artistic Director of Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme comments, *tiata fahodzi has brought together companies that are passionate about developing BAME talent and understand the very real and complex barriers to becoming an artistic leader in theatre. We are excited to be a partner in this vital programme giving directors the chance to develop as artists and leaders. Together we can change the face of British theatre - which is what RTYDS is all about.*

For more information, see www.rtyds.co.uk.

ITC

ITC is the management association for theatre's independent sector. ITC offer a range of practical professional development opportunities and are committed to helping to create a thriving community of performing arts professionals. ITC has over 15 years' experience of recruiting for and running positive action training programmes including the Gain Programme which worked with 120 board members and Fast Track for 150 diverse Management Trainees with 60% of graduates continuing to work in the sector

Charlotte Jones, CEO of ITC, comments, *ITC is delighted that Sustained Theatre ACE funding has enabled this exciting project to go ahead. We are looking forward to working with this inspirational group of partners to deliver leadership development in the arts - a great opportunity for new arts leaders and the sector as a whole.*

For more information, see www.itc-arts.org.

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