



AFRICAN ODYSSEYS

A Date with the Devil: Darcus Howe's Journey from Black Power to Broadcasting

Born in Trinidad during the dying days of British colonialism, Darcus Howe settled in the UK in the 1960s. As an activist he was central to organising political campaigns, including the historic Mangrove Nine trial and The Black Peoples' Day of Action, 1981. Howe also became a household name with a career in broadcasting that spanned three decades from the 1980s. His politically provocative and penetrating stance was richly imbued with his passion for literature and the arts, and he brought poets, musicians and his mentor CLR James to the fore. Changing the face of TV, Howe created stimulating programming that stands as a landmark in enlightened broadcasting.

Join Tony Warner, of Black History Walks, and assorted special guests for a day in which we explore Howe's activist years and examine how they connect to his work in TV through talks, interviews and a wealth of clips with contributions from key figures including writer and exec producer Farrukh Dhondy, and Race Today Collective founding member and fellow activist, Leila Hassan.

Dotun Adebayo is a British radio presenter, writer, and publisher. He is best known for his work on *Up All Night* on BBC Radio 5 Live, as well as the obituary programme *Brief Lives*.

His columns and articles have been published in *Pride Magazine* and the *New Nation*, as well as broadsheet and tabloid newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Times*, *London Evening Standard* and the *News of the World*. Some of these columns were compiled into *Can I Have My Balls Back Please* (2000) and its sequel *Sperm Bandits* (2002).

Adebayo's television work includes writing and presenting the docudrama *Sperm Bandits*, the documentary *White Girls Are Easy* (both for Channel 4), and the weekly show *Heavy TV*. Adebayo is co-founder of Colourtelly, Britain's first general-interest black internet television station.

Adebayo founded the publishing company X Press, producing black fiction such as *Baby Father*, Victor Headley's *Yardie* and *Cop Killer*. He is also responsible for the Nia imprint of literary black fiction, including titles such as J. California Cooper's *In Search of Satisfaction*, and the 20/20 imprint for current generic fiction such as the best-seller *Curvy Lovebox*. Adebayo also published the comic magazine *Skank*.

Tariq Ali is a writer, journalist and filmmaker. He was educated at Oxford University, where he became involved in student politics, in particular with the movement against the war in Vietnam. On graduating he led the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. He owned his own independent television production company, Bandung, which produced programmes for Channel 4 in the UK during the 1980s. He is a regular broadcaster on BBC Radio and contributes articles and journalism to magazines and newspapers including *The Guardian* and the *London Review of Books*. He is editorial director of

London publishers Verso and is on the board of the *New Left Review*, for whom he is also an editor.

His fiction includes a series of historical novels about Islam: *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* (1992), *The Book of Saladin* (1998), *The Stone Woman* (2000), *A Sultan in Palermo* (2005), and *Night of the Golden Butterfly* (2010). These five books are collectively known as 'The Islam Quintet'.

His non-fiction includes *1968: Marching in the Streets* (1998), a social history of the 1960s; *Conversations with Edward Said* (2005); *Rough Music: Blair, Bombs, Baghdad, London, Terror* (2005); and *Speaking of Empire and Resistance* (2005), which takes the form of a series of conversations with the author. *The Leopard and the Fox* (2007) is the script of a three-part TV series commissioned by the BBC and later withdrawn, and includes the background to the story. His books of essays include *The Clash of Fundamentalisms* (2002), and *The Protocols of the Elders of Sodom* (2009).

More recent work includes *The Obama Syndrome: Surrender at Home, War Abroad* (2010), *On History: Tariq Ali and Oliver Stone in Conversation* (2011), *Kashmir: The Case for Freedom* (2011), *The Extreme Centre: A Warning* (2015), *Permanent Counter Revolution* (2016), and *The Dilemmas of Lenin: Terrorism, War, Empire, Love, Revolution* (2017).

Farrukh Dhondy was born in Poona, India in 1944 in a Parsi family. He obtained a Bachelor of Science degree from the Poona University in 1964 and was awarded a scholarship to read English at Cambridge University, after which he moved to Leicester University for his Master's degree.

From 1968 to 1978 Dhondy worked as a further education lecturer and schoolteacher in the Midlands and London, before entering television. From 1984 to 1997, Dhondy worked as Commissioning Editor, Multicultural Programming, for Channel 4 TV, UK. In this capacity, he was responsible for hundreds of hours of TV in all genres: entertainment, situation, comedy, TV drama, film, education and factual, and helped greenlight iconic shows like *Desmond's* and *The Bandung File*.

From 1997 to 2002, Dhondy worked as a freelance journalist and writer, contributing articles to Indian newspapers and magazines like *The Pioneer*, *Asian Age* and *India Today*. In 2002, he joined a film company based in India, Kaleidoscope International. His literary output is immense. His most recent works are the novel *The Prophet of Love* (2013), the play *Devdas*, which premiered in London in 2013, and a collection of translation of Rumi published in 2014.

Leila Hassan Howe was a founding member of the Race Today Collective. She was an activist in the Black Unity and Freedom Party in the Black Power Movement of the '70's. As a member of the Institute of Race Relations she was part of the group that staged a palace coup that radicalised that institution.

She is one of the editors of the Race Today Anthology 'Here to Stay and Here to Fight' and is currently a member of the Darcus Howe Legacy Collective.

Leila was a member of the New Cross Massacre Action Committee which organised the historic Black Peoples Day of Action when 20,000 marched through the streets of London in protest at the murder of 13 young people who perished in the fire at 439 New Cross Road.

She is the widow of Darcus Howe.

Tamara Howe, the daughter of Darcus Howe, began her media career in the mid-eighties alongside her dad and Tariq Ali, who were launching their groundbreaking series *The Bandung File*. Those early years at *Bandung* gave her the unique opportunity to work across a wide range of Black and Asian programming, following stories which took her across the globe; from Selma, Alabama to Kingston Jamaica, to Toxteth, Liverpool.

In 1989 Tamara joined London Weekend Television, where she later got the chance to work with Darcus again – this time on the *Devil's Advocate*. She was by his side in Durban South Africa when he recorded the infamous Buthelezi episode.

Thirty-seven years on, Tamara is still working in the TV industry and currently holds the role of Director of Commercial and Operations at Naked TV.

Outside of work she is a founding member of the Darcus Howe Legacy, and sits on the Board of the Edinburgh TV Festival and the charity MEWE 360.

Anthony Wall

Martin Scorsese described *Arena* as ‘home to some of the greatest non-fiction filmmaking of the past 40 years’. Anthony Wall was at the heart of *Arena* for those 40 years, first as a director, then as series editor from 1985 to 2018. During that time, *Arena* won nine BAFTAs, with twenty five nominations; the Prix Italia; six Royal Television Society awards; Primetime and International Emmys; the Peabody and numerous other honours including the Special Medallion at the Telluride Film Festival for ‘cutting edge filmmaking’. It was there that Werner Herzog, a fellow medallion recipient, declared *Arena* to be ‘the oasis in the sea of insanity that is television’. Since standing down as Editor, Wall has been committed to curating seasons of *Arena* classics and recomposing the *Arena* archive of 700 films into newly created outcomes and forms. In 2019 Wall and *Arena* were given the Mel Novikoff Award at the San Francisco Film Festival for ‘an outstanding contribution to cinema’.

Tony Warner is a community activist and guerrilla historian. He has been exhibiting educational and empowering films about African/Caribbean history in museums, art galleries, restaurants and youth clubs since 2000. He pioneered community partnerships with and lectured at the Imperial War Museum, National Portrait Gallery, Museum of Docklands and the BFI – which all led to huge increases in Black audiences.

Tony is the co-founder and chair of the African Odysseys programme. This grassroots initiative has been exhibiting African diaspora films plus Q&As on a monthly basis at the BFI Southbank since 2007. It is the only such programme in the country and has been attended by tens of thousands of people. He is also the founder of Black History Walks in London, a group which explores the Caribbean and African history of the capital via twelve guided walks, talks, films, courses, bus tours and river cruises. The tours have been featured on various national and international media such as CNN, BBC, ITV, *The Guardian*, Channel 4 etc. Since 2011, in an ongoing collaboration with the Nubian Jak charity he has sponsored five Black historical blue plaques across London and researched ten more.

As a management consultant specialising in diversity, he has trained various corporate, government and educational agencies; including creating a 26-week course for pupils in primary and secondary schools to improve self-esteem, behaviour and academic performance.

Tony is the author of *Black History Walks in London Volume 1*. The book explores the African/Caribbean presence in London over the last 2000 years. It is due to be published by Jacaranda Books in October 2021. He is currently working on a GCSE history book on migration and Black British Civil Rights for use in schools.

Pat Younge is the co-MD of Cardiff Productions, and an award-winning journalist and creative leader with 30 years’ experience working for major broadcasters at home and abroad. He has led the BBC Television Production studio, and was President of US cable network, Travel Channel Media. Along with Trevor Phillips and Ambreen Hameed, Pat was one of the co-creators of *Devil’s Advocate* and was series producer on its first series.

Running Order

- 12:00 Overview of the day by programmer David Somerset.
- 12:10 Panel Discussion on Darcus Howe: Tony Warner in conversation with Leila Hassan Howe and Farrukh Dhondy, followed by audience questions.
- 13:30 Lunch Break.
- 14:15 Anthony Wall introduces an extract from *Arena* featuring Michael Smith and C.L.R. James.
- 14:40 Overview of *The Bandung File* by Tariq Ali and Farrukh Dhondy, followed by selected extracts.
- 15:45 Short break.
- 16:00 Panel Discussion on *The Bandung File*: Dotun Adebayo in conversation with Farrukh Dhondy, Tariq Ali and Tamara Howe, followed by audience questions.
- 16:45 Overview of *Devil’s Advocate* by Pat Younge, followed by selected extracts introduced by Dotun Adebayo and Tamara Howe.
- 17:40 Final summary by David Somerset.

Mi Cyaan Believe It by Michael Smith

Mi seh mi cyaan believe it
mi seh mi cyaan believe it
room dem a rent
mi apply widin
but as me go in
cockroach rat an scorpion also come in
waan good
nose haffi run
but me naw sideung pan igh wall
like Humpty Dumpty
mi a face me reality
one lickle bwoy come blow im orn
an mi look pan im wid scorn
an mi realize ow me five bwoy pickney
was a victim of de tricks
dem call partisan pally-trix

an mi ban mi belly
an mi bawl
an mi ban mi belly
an mi bawl
Lawd
mi cyaan believe it
mi seh mi cyaan believe it
what a night what a plight
an we cyaan get a bite
mi life is a stiff fight
an mi cyaan believe it
mi seh mi cyaan believe it
sitting on de corner wid me fren
talkin about tings an time
me hear one voice seh
‘Who dat?’
mi seh ‘A who dat?’
A who dat a seh who dat
when mi a seh who dat?’
When yuh teck a stock
dem lick we dung flat
teet start fly
and big man start cry
an mi cyaan believe it
mi seh mi cyaan believe it
do odder day me pass one yard
pan de hill
when me teck a stock
me hear ‘Hey bwoy!’
‘Yes, Mam?’ ‘Hey bwoy!’
‘Yes, Mam?’ ‘You clean up de dawg shit?’
‘Yes, Mam’
an mi cyaan believe it
mi seh mi cyaan believe it
Doris a modder of four
get a wul as a domestic
boss man move in
an bap si kaisico she pregnant again
bap si kaisico she pregnant again
an mi cyaan believe it
dah yard de odder night
when mi hear ‘Fire!’
‘Fire, to plate claat!’
Who dead? You dead?
Who dead? Me dead?
Who dead? Harry dead?
Who dead? Eleven dead
wooooooooo
Orange Street fire de pan me head
an mi cyaan believe it
mi seh mi cyaan believe it
Lawd, mi see some black bud
livin inna one buildin

but no rent no pay
so dem cyaan stay
Lawd, de oppress an de dispossess
cyaan get no res
what nex?
Teck a trip from Kingston
to Jamaica
Teck twelve from a dozen
an mi see mi muma in heaven
MAD OUSE! MA OUSE!
mi seh mi cyaan believe it
mi seh mi cyaan believe it
yuh believe it?
how yuh fi believe it
when yuh laugh
yuh blind yuh eye to it?
But mi know yuh believe it
mi know yuh believe it

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