



AFRICAN ODYSSEY

Claude McKay, from Harlem to Marseille

Claude McKay, from Harlem to Marseille

Director: Matthieu Verdeil
France 2021
80 mins
Digital

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We are pleased to welcome writer and poet, Hannah Lowe, who joins this event and discuss her life and work in connection to the life and work of Claude McKay. We are also really pleased to welcome Jason Allen-Paisant (Jamaican poet, writer and academic) and Colin Grant (director of WritersMosaic). Panel discussion hosted by actor-director Burt Caesar.

A rebellious figure of the Harlem Renaissance and champion of the 'new world' African, poet and novelist Claude McKay wandered the world for much of his early life, frequenting the artistic and political avant-gardes while creating an enduring body of work. This stunning documentary portrait is richly illustrated, drawing on rare film and photographic footage, featuring insightful interviews and accompanied by a stirring soundtrack.

Speakers:

Jason Allen-Paisant is a Jamaican writer, poet, and scholar who works as an associate professor of Critical Theory and Creative Writing at the University of Manchester. He's the author of two critically acclaimed poetry collections: *Thinking with Trees*, winner of the 2022 OCM Bocas Prize for poetry; and *Self-Portrait as Othello*, which took both the Forward Prize and the T. S. Eliot Prize for 2023. His philosophical treatise, *Engagements with Aimé Césaire: Thinking with Spirits*, is published with Oxford University Press, and his creative non-fiction book, *The Possibility of Tenderness*, will be out with Hutchinson Heinemann in 2025.

Colin Grant's books include *Bageye at the Wheel*, short-listed for the Pen Ackerley Prize, and *Homecoming: Voices of the Windrush Generation*, a BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week. His latest book is *I'm Black So You Don't Have to Be*. His oral history of migration to Britain, *What We Leave We Carry* will be published in 2025.

Grant is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and director of *WritersMosaic*, an online magazine and division of the Royal Literary Fund. Grant writes for a number of newspapers including the *TLS*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer* and *The New York Review of Books*.

Hannah Lowe is a poet, memoirist and academic.

Her latest book, *The Kids*, a Poetry Book Society 'Choice' for Autumn, won the Costa Poetry Award and the Costa Book of the Year, 2021.

Her first poetry collection *Chick* (Bloodaxe, 2013) won the Michael Murphy Memorial Award for Best First Collection. In September 2014, she was named as one of 20 Next Generation poets.

Her family memoir *Long Time, No See* (Periscope, 2015) featured as Radio 4's Book of the Week. Her second collection, *Chan*, is published by Bloodaxe. (2016). She has also published six chapbooks: *The Hitcher* (Rialto, 2012); *R x* (sine wave peak, 2013); and *Ormonde* (Hercules Editions, 2014) and *The Neighbourhood* (Outspoken Press, 2019); *Old Friends* (Hercules Editions, 2022) and *Rock, Bird, Butterfly* (Hercules Editions, 2022)

She undertook her AHRC-funded PhD in Creative Writing at Newcastle University, and is now Reader in Creative Writing at Brunel University.

Host: Burt Caesar is an actor, director and broadcaster with extensive credits across theatre, film, television and radio. He is a former Associate Director at the Royal Court Theatre and an Artistic Adviser at RADA. His features for BBC Radio include *Derek Walcott's The Schooner 'Flight'*; *Caribbean Voices: A Far Cry from London*; *'To Sir, With Love' Revisited*; *Black Students in Red Russia*; and *What We Leave We Carry: The Life & Work of John La Rose*. He curated the BFI salons *Black Shakespeare* (a survey of non-white actors in film adaptations of his plays) and *The Price of Baldwin's Ticket* (an anthology of James Baldwin's writing and appearances on film). Recently he has curated film seasons at the BFI dedicated to pioneering Bermudan actor Earl Cameron, and for the late Hollywood giant Harry Belafonte: *Movies Race Resistance*.

Programme notes and credits compiled by Sight and Sound and the BFI Documentation Unit

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