

Newsletter

Waka Waka Africa North East is an organisation based in the North East of England celebrating and promoting African and Caribbean music and culture.

www.wakawakafricanortheast.com

Contact us with details of local events, CVs of artists, and check out our What's On section.

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Phoenix rising at Northern Stage



Phoenix Dance's thrilling new dance piece celebrates the 70th anniversary of SS Empire Windrush's arrival, bringing the first Caribbean migrants to the UK. The work is a lively celebration of the rise of multicultural Britain with an uplifting mix of calypso, jazz, blues, gospel and reggae. **May 9th** Northern Stage, Newcastle

Unsung Heroes & Heroes of Afrikan Heritage

Dynamix Skatepark in Gateshead celebrate the lives and achievements of people of African heritage, giving inspiration for the work of artists and activists who challenge racism today.

Exhibition runs to **31 May** at Dynamix - (see <http://www.dynamixcic.org/unsung/>) and includes large-scale mural portraits of African heritage people by artist Dreph, as well as rotating art installations, projections and educational panels bringing to light less known stories.

CELEBRATE! the countries and cultures of

The Commonwealth

As the UK hosts the 25th Commonwealth Heads of Government conference

Sunday 22nd April, 3pm



With music, song and dance from around the Commonwealth

TYNE THEATRE AND OPERA HOUSE

WESTGATE ROAD, NEWCASTLE NE1 4AG

MC: JEFF BROWN of the BBC

Tickets £8 (£5 concessions)

www.tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk/

Raising funds for the Queen's Commonwealth Trust for young people

Organised on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear

www.facebook.com/COMMONWEALTHCELEBRATION/

WAKA WAKA AFRICA NORTH EAST

MORE TO ENJOY

Fri 13 April: THE DUALERS, top reggae & ska band, Longlands Club, Middlesbrough; also Cluny, Newcastle on **Sat 14 April**

Sat 21 April: TOKO TELO, featuring D'Gary, Regis Gizavo, vocals of Monika Njava, three stars of Madagascan music. Sage Gateshead

Friday 4 May THE VOICES OF VIRTUE GOSPEL CHOIR & CROSSINGS BAND, Live Theatre, Newcastle

Fri 11 May MISTY IN ROOTS, Cluny, Newcastle - top UK roots reggae

Tuesday 19th June - SONA JOBARTEH at Sage Gateshead - "Africa's first female griot kora virtuoso, and also a fine singer and composer, blending traditional music, blues and Afropop to impressive effect"

THE MASTER DRUMMER OF AFROBEAT



Nigeria's Tony Oladipo Allen, described by Brian Eno as "perhaps the greatest drummer who has ever lived" was the rhythmic engine of Fela Kuti's Afrobeat. Tony went on to pursue his own projects while collaborating with everyone from Oumou Sangare to Damon Albarn. Still going strong, he appears at Sage Gateshead on **Friday 6th April** as part of the Gateshead International Jazz Festival - see over for more.

SEUN KUTI

Seun Kuti, youngest son of Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti appears at Sage Gateshead on **Wednesday 2nd May**.

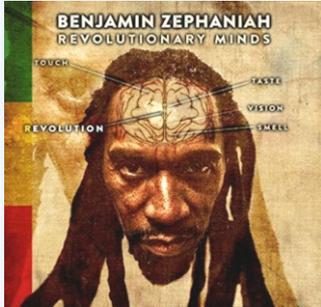
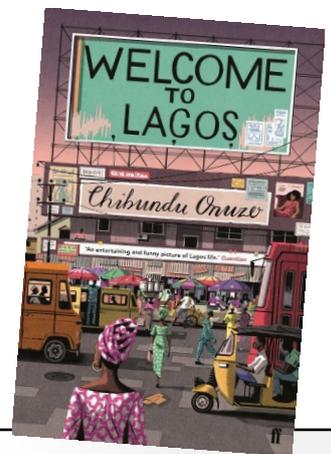
Seun is as incensed by injustice and inspired by greatness as his father ever was. Now, with his mighty new album *Last Revolutionary*, the Lagos-based scion honours the revolutionaries who've gone before and rallies the torchbearers to come. The boy who first appeared onstage with his father aged eight (at the Harlem Apollo) has this wowed festivals including Glastonbury and Roskild, sending critics into raptures.

Come and support this great charity event, with lots of local stars of Commonwealth country origins such as the wonderful **Voices of Virtue** gospel choir and, as seen on "The Voice", Malaysian-born **Jeffri Ramli**.



Kusoma is the African-Caribbean Book Club created by Waka Waka and the North East of England African Community Association, and supported by Newcastle Libraries. Our next book to borrow, read and discuss is "Welcome to Lagos" by Chibundu Onuzo. All welcome - just call into the central city library to borrow a copy of the book (mention the book club and you will be directed to where the books are), then join us on the night. The reading group will meet to discuss it on Tuesday 17 April, 5.30-6.45pm – usually room 7 on level 6 but check the library screens for any change.

When army officer Chike Ameobi is ordered to kill innocent civilians, he knows that it is time to leave. As he travels towards Lagos, he becomes the leader of a new platoon, a band of runaways who share his desire for a better life. Their arrival in the city coincides with the eruption of a political scandal. As moving as it is mesmerising, Welcome to Lagos is a novel about the power of our dreams for the future and the place of morality in a sometimes hostile world.



BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH is at Sage Gateshead on June 9th - book early!
<http://www.sagegateshead.com/event/benjamin-zephaniah/>

He befriended Nelson Mandela, fought in the 1980s race riots and recorded radical and relevant reggae music with Bob Marley's former band. Benjamin Zephaniah was unable to read and write at school but became one of Britain's most remarkable poets. And now he's back with his first tour in eight years, to coincide with his remarkable autobiography, *The Life And Rhymes Of Benjamin Zephaniah*. In a compelling and inspiring show, Zephaniah will explain how he fought injustice and discrimination to lead a remarkable life, while sharing a selection of favourite stories and poems.

We were delighted with the success of the **GBEN/Write** project last year, with Newcastle's Live Theatre delivering the idea by Waka Waka and part-funded by the friends and family of the late Osa Omorogbe.



Now Live have a grant from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation to continue this work providing weekly career development, mentoring and support sessions lasting over 6 months for young writers aged 16 – 25 of Afro Caribbean origin. - great news! Details will be available soon.

In the meantime, another of Osa's friends Kelechi Dibia has set up a Just Giving page to raise match-funding. Kelechi's recent 50th birthday party featured not only music and dance but two playreads from the GBEN participants Joan Geronimo and Monica Hardcastle. You can contribute to the continuation of this fantastic initiative through <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/gben-write>

Friday 6th April 2018, 7pm - 10pm Gateshead International Jazz Festival 2018: The Sun Ra Arkestra; Tony Allen: A Tribute to Art Blakey; Zara McFarlane. Plus pre-concert talk at 6pm <http://www.sagegateshead.com/event/the-sun-ra-arkestra/>



Tony Allen accompanied Fela Kuti's Koola Lobitos and then Africa 70, for which he developed a new music language: Afrobeat, combining Yoruba rhythms and funk instruments with themes of revolution. Afrobeat propelled a career that saw Tony pursue his own projects while collaborating with everyone from Oumou Sangare to Damon Albarn. 2017 saw Tony realise a dream: to play tribute to the music of the most African of the bebop fathers, Art Blakey, for a new release on Blue Note which has been universally well received. The Nigerian-born, Paris-based drummer's is now touring the Tribute as a quartet.

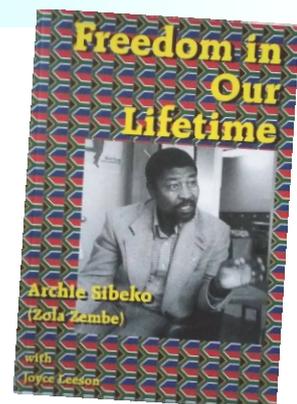
The Sun Ra Arkestra - Sun Ra, a.k.a. Herman Poole "Sonny" Blount was hailed as "one of the great big-band leaders, pianists, and surrealists of jazz" (New York Times). Composer, keyboardist, bandleader, philosopher, poet, Sun Ra led his "Intergalactic Arkestra" of thirty-plus musicians in a career that ranged from boogie-woogie and swing to be-bop, free jazz, fusion, and New Age music. The Arkestra still performs today, under the direction of alto saxophonist **Marshall Allen**, now in his 90s!

Eloquent and provocative singer-songwriter, **Zara McFarlane**, is the UK's Black British foremost Jazz Vocalist. With two critically acclaimed albums to her name, she inhabits an unusual musical landscape, fearlessly exploring original material & reworking well known classics from the worlds of Jazz and Jamaican music.



Tributes have been paid in the UK and South Africa to former freedom fighter **Archie Sibeko** who died on March 27th aged 90.

Archie, also known as Zola Zembe, was a trade union organiser in South Africa for the African National Congress (ANC) who went on to become a leading figure in the fight against apartheid. When Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) was formed, he was among the first to become involved in the Western Cape. He was imprisoned without charge and shared a cell with Nelson Mandela after being accused of high treason and arrested along with 155 others. In retirement he joined his wife Joyce in Tynemouth. He received numerous awards including an honorary degree from Newcastle University last year.



See this link for more about his achievements for the cause in South Africa. <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/national-orders/recipient/archibald-sibeko-also-known-zola-zembe-1928>

Contact wakawakafricanortheast@sky.com if you would like to buy a copy of Archie's inspiring autobiography.