

TALES OF TRANSATLANTIC FREEDOM

Created and performed by Andrea Baker & Howard Moody
PRESS and PRODUCTION PACK



Available: From March 2023

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Created by **Andrea Baker & Howard Moody**
Directed by **John Paul McGroarty**

A **Yard Heads International** production
Supported by **Pianodrome, Edinburgh, Museums and Galleries Scotland and National Center for Race Amity, Boston MA**

TALES OF TRANSATLANTIC FREEDOM BY ANDREA BAKER AND HOWARD MOODY



“a stunning piece of work”

“you could hear a pin drop through the thrall in which she holds the audience, spellbound”

[Musical Theatre Review](#)

Dreams by Langston Hughes

*Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.*

*Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow..*

Glorious mezzo soprano **Andrea Baker** created *Tales of Transatlantic Freedom* in collaboration with award-winning international composer **Howard Moody** and artistic director **John Paul McGroarty** as part of her Sing Sistah Sing! Series.

Combining gentle movement, poetry, excerpts, performance, piano and song Andrea Baker and Howard Moody accompany audiences on an emotional journey that lays bare the interconnectedness of our musical heritage and our potential for reconciliation.

Andrea performs an incredible range of rare and beautiful songs from across centuries and oceans, connecting and exploring musical traditions with awe-inspiring music, story and song.

Tales of Transatlantic Freedom celebrates and highlights African diasporic narratives from our living musical cultures of folk, blues, jazz, psalm singing, opera as well as the music of Robert Burns.

Premiered at the legendary [Pianodrome](#) venue at Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2022 *Tales of Transatlantic Freedom* has been developed by Yard Heads International as part of Scotland’s Year of Stories.

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2022 REVIEWS:

[Vox Carnyx](#)

[Musical Theatre Review](#)

[Edinburgh Music Review](#)

Website: www.singsistahsing.com

Link to [headshot](#) of Andrea Baker - please credit John Need.

Social Media

Twitter: @ABakerMezzo

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#RaceAmity #RaceAmityDay

ABOUT THE TEAM

Andrea Baker (Co-creator and performing artist) is hailed as a 'stupendous and heartrending' talent (*Bild Zeitung*), American-Scottish mezzo-soprano Andrea Baker is internationally renowned for her 'enchantingly powerful' performances (*Das Orchester*). An operatic trailblazer, she was the first African American to take the role of Carmen in Australia, at Sydney Opera House, and the first to perform the roles of Fricke, Erda, and Waltraute in Wagner's *Ring* in China. In addition to her celebrated work on the opera stage, she has taken on an extraordinary breadth of voices across various media. Her one-woman show *Sing Sistah Sing!* is a joyous, soulful celebration of the African American female voice, encompassing jazz, gospel, blues, lieder, and storytelling. Self-written and self-produced, this groundbreaking show has toured to sold-out audiences around the world including at the 2020 Edinburgh International Festival. As a radio presenter and documentary-maker, she can be heard across the BBC, including on Radio Scotland, Radio 4, and Radio 3's *Sounds Connected* and has produced her own series of podcasts. Andrea is an ambassador for 'Scotland's Street Orchestra,' The Nevis Ensemble. andreabaker.org

Howard Moody (Co-creator and performing artist) has written six operas, commissioned and produced by La Monnaie, Glyndebourne, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Opéra national du Rhin. His musical *The Nine Coloured Deer* is presently touring China. Other works include orchestral and chamber pieces for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, twelve symphonic works for the London Symphony Orchestra and numerous instrumental, vocal and choral pieces. As a conductor, he has worked with orchestras, choral groups and opera companies worldwide. He is the artistic director of La Folia – a production company that creates large-scale arts projects. As a keyboard player, Howard crosses the worlds of classical and improvised music on piano, harpsichord and organ, recording for ECM, Chandos, Guild, SDG and the BBC. He is a principal keyboard player of the Orchestra of St Johns and English Baroque Soloists. As an improviser, he has worked extensively with saxophonist John Surman with whom he has played in many of the major international jazz festivals. howardmoody.co.uk

John Paul McGroarty (Director) is an artistic director based in Edinburgh and co-founder of Yard Heads International. Trained at the University of Ulster, the Traverse Theatre and Glasgow MayFest. His experience includes work at West Yorkshire Playhouse, the Lyceum Edinburgh, Traverse Edinburgh, ITV and Arthro underground arts collective. As Artistic Director of Leith Festival for seven years 2002-9 John Paul directed new creative commissions and the opening of dozens of venues for performance, exhibition and music. As Trustee of Leith Theatre Trust and Artistic Director from 2012- 2016 he was a key part of the venue's drive to re-open the Main Auditorium for public performance. Directing work includes: *The Last Days of Mankind* (Leith Theatre); *Man To Man* (Leith On the Fringe); *Heartfelt* (Leith Festival); *Not In My Name* (Neu Reekie); *Making Treaty Seven* (MT7 Society – Banff Centre); *Come On!* (Damage); *Two Sevens Clash* (Traverse). TV credits include: *Travels in Written Britain* the Scottish edition, *South Bank Show Irvine Welsh Special*. www.yardheads.com

DEVELOPMENT OF *TALES OF TRANSATLANTIC FREEDOM*

Tales of Transatlantic Freedom is a new show developed as part of Andrea Baker's [Sing Sistah Sing! Series](#).

Sing Sistah Sing! was conceived and written by Andrea Baker to celebrate the sound and extraordinary breadth of the African American female voice featuring artists such as Leontyne Price, Marian Anderson, Donna Summer, Nina Simone and Billie Holiday, women active in the civil rights movement and in struggles for artistic freedom in opera, jazz and blues.

In 2020 director **John Paul McGroarty** approached Andrea having heard her performing as part of the Lyceum Edinburgh's US Election Night Cabaret. Through their exploration and research, sparked by the transatlantic work of late composer Serge Hovey and Andrea's own journey across the Atlantic to Scotland, they identified music and song that would reflect historical stories and transcend borders and oceans.

Supported by the Year of Stories fund, a partnership between VisitScotland and Museums and Galleries Scotland the project developed in 2022 and composer Howard Moody joined the team.

With the kind cooperation and support of legendary Edinburgh community-interest music and performance venue the Pianodrome, the artists had time to focus on the new show.

In *Tales of Transatlantic Freedom*, co-created with Howard Moody, Andrea has explored songs, music and artists connected with transatlantic journeys and stories. Weaving musical styles from Gaelic psalm singing, field song, holler, folk, blues, opera and Robert Burns into one piece Andrea and Howard demonstrate our interconnection and inseparability.

Tales of Transatlantic Freedom is a compelling and moving reminder of our collective histories and a call to celebrate our common humanity. We celebrate our human potential to overcome the forces that would drive us apart and create peace and beauty together.

In 2023 we are delighted to be supported by the National Center for Race Amity, Boston, MA to take *Tales of Transatlantic Freedom* to audiences in the United States.

Workshops – additional programming option

Both Andrea and Howard can offer workshops related to their work as performing artists. Andrea has delivered gospel and *Sing Sistah Sing!* contextual workshops alongside her main show. These would be expected to happen on a preceding or subsequent day booking.

Our supporters:

www.pianodrome.org

www.raceamity.org

ABOUT TALES OF TRANSATLANTIC FREEDOM

50-55 minute live performance piece with two performers, mezzo soprano and pianist featuring a huge range of musical styles in song. 30 min and 70 min versions can also be presented by arrangement.

At the Fringe 2022 we present the piece in a venue with 100 capacity however Andrea and Howard are familiar with large scale auditoriums and audiences of 1200+.

Workshops are best suited to groups of 10-30

Venue requirements

Grand piano tuned to 440
Suitable for standard concert (flat white) or full theatre coloured lighting
Small side table 50-60cm high x2
No PA required

Venue staff – Front of House, Box Office, 1x SM/Tech

Audience

No age restriction (suggested 8+), no group size limitation, no warnings

Scheduling:

Access to performance & dressing room space three hours in advance for vocal warm-up, lighting set-up, staging arrangements.

Dependent on the event, running time: 30 minutes to 1 hour ten, with no interval

Marketing

Venue to market and promote the event with materials, assets and campaigns to be organised in agreement with the artists.

Documentation

Full length video documentation: available on request.

For more information, please contact:

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