



## SHANGWE NEWS ISSUE 23 – November 2011

### What's In This Issue?

1. Welcome
2. Shangwe Play Project Collaboration - 24 Hr Divas
3. Shangwe Performing Arts Collaboration – NEW!
4. Shangwe's Website Launch
5. Writer Spotlight: Maggie Harris
6. Shangwe News – Next Edition

#### 1. Welcome

Welcome to the 23rd edition of *Shangwe News* – the quarterly on-line newsletter that aims to keep you informed of past events and gives you a preview of future topical events, along with the opportunity to network and/or contribute a poem or article. The purpose of *Shangwe News* is to promote new and diverse creative writing. If you have any comments or information for the newsletter please email: [nicole@shangwe.com](mailto:nicole@shangwe.com)

#### 2. Shangwe Play Project Collaboration - 24 Hr Divas



**24 Hr Divas** was previewed at the \*Rich Mix on 21st October 2011, as part of Snapshots, a bite sized festival in 13 parts celebrating East London in its Olympic year with its fourth instalment, Black History Month...Black Future. 'To weave or not to weave' 24 Hr Divas is a comic tale about hair and ideology. Judging by the speed at which this event sold out (over 100 tickets booked within one week), this is a subject that black women feel strongly about. The preview was a mixture of performance and play-reading. After the event, many

came and shared their thoughts about the play with the production team: director Gail Babb, writer and producer Pauline Walker, producer Nicole Moore. It is hoped that the play will now be developed and tour the UK next year.

Acknowledgements: Congratulations to Pauline Walker for taking her creative initiative from the page to the stage. Thanks to Talawa Theatre Company for providing Hot Spot Studio Rehearsal space and to Rich Mix for donating their main theatre as part of the Snapshots Festival programme.

\*Located in the heart of Shoreditch, Rich Mix is a three screen digital cinema and arts centre bringing the best in film, performing arts and live music to East London. [www.richmix.org.uk](http://www.richmix.org.uk)

For more details about 24 Hr Divas visit: [www.24hrdivas.wordpress.com](http://www.24hrdivas.wordpress.com)

### **3. Shangwe Performing Arts Collaboration - NEW!**

In October 2011, Shangwe's founder Nicole Moore established a new team of 3 creative individuals - Amanda Epe, Brenda White and Nelissa Mendy, who have all contributed to Shangwe's anthologies. Nicole and the team will be writing/developing a mix of performance pieces, e.g. monologues, dialogues, poetry and African dance with a view to showcasing the acts next year. Themes include: identity, 'black' culture (hair, music, style) and gender.

**WANTED:** Short written perspectives from women/men of all races, aged 18 and over, who grow/wear their hair in 'dread'locs. Nicole Moore is researching a new monologue/dialogue performance piece and seeking responses to a short questionnaire regarding why people grow their hair in locs and what influences their decision to grow them. Please provide your response by answering the following questions:

1. How old were you when you started your locs?
2. What influenced you to grow them? E.g. fashion, culture, religion, politics, etc.
3. What has been your friends and family's reactions?
4. Are you enjoying your locs' journey and have there been any challenges?
5. Do you feel that you have grown as a person having grown your locs?
6. Misc: Feel free to include anything that you would like to say in this answer.

Please email your perspectives along with your age and photo to:

[nicole@shangwe.com](mailto:nicole@shangwe.com) **DEADLINE: 30/12/11. Many thanks!**

### **4. Shangwe's Website Launch**

**Shangwe Creative Arts New-Look Website Launched 6th September 2011:** [www.shangwe.com](http://www.shangwe.com)

**Shangwe's** website [www.shangwe.com](http://www.shangwe.com) was initially launched in January 2005 and its purpose remains the same, i.e. to contribute to the development of

new Black British literature by promoting writing by and for UK Black and Mixed-Race women. Interested in the arts, in particular creative writing, then please do take a look at the new **Shangwe Creative Arts** website where you will be able to:

- Sign up for **Shangwe News**, the quarterly on-line newsletter, which aims to keep you informed of past and future topical news and events along with the opportunity to network and/or contribute a poem or article. Here you can view previous issues in 2011.
- Browse all of the Shangwe Anthology **Book Reviews/Interviews**
- Browse the **Services** page, with drop down menus to **Creative Writing Consultancy, Readings and Event Hosting**
- Read the **Latest Tweets**
- Browse the **Photo Gallery**; which includes images of **Shangwe's** Book Launches and Book Readings; you may see a photo that includes you there!
- Find out Nicole Moore's **Top Five Favourite Books**
- View a selection of Nicole Moore's **Poems**
- View the **Shangwe Blog**

## 5. Writer Spotlight: Maggie Harris

Maggie Harris has published five collections of poetry. *Limbolands* won the Guyana Prize for Literature 2000, and *After a Visit to a Botanical Garden* was shortlisted for the Guyana Prize 2011. *Kiskadee Girl* was awarded an Arts Council New Writing bursary in 2004, and was published by Kingston University Press, 2011. [www.maggieharris.co.uk](http://www.maggieharris.co.uk)



Maggie has kindly submitted an article **From Poetry to Prose** about the process involved in writing her memoir from a poet's perspective, which is attached as a PDF file. The following is an extract:

### **From Poetry to Prose, writing *Kiskadee Girl***

I first thought of writing a memoir more than twenty years ago, when in an adult education creative writing class my tutor put an arrangement of assorted items on our table and asked us to respond to whatever took our fancy. One of these items was a conch shell, and when I saw it, a memory from 1969 immediately came to mind. My father had just died, suddenly and terrifyingly, and previously I had begun to experience an unexplained fear that turned out

to be a premonition. My mother, my three younger sisters and I moved from shock to sorrow, and then became witness to a series of strange and unexplained events. My mother then exercised what she had been told was the way to free my father's spirit: by throwing away something that had belonged to him, and sending it on its way with as much cursing as she could bring herself to do. For my mother, a staunch and well-behaved Catholic, to curse was itself a rite of passage, and the possession selected was an unfortunate conch shell, which as far back as I could recall had sat on a doily on top of our Phillips radio doing no-one any harm. (Continued...see attachment)

Here is a link to an interview with Maggie Harris by the Arts Council England:  
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/kent-grants-arts-supported-writer-maggie-harris-publish/>

## **6. Shangwe News – Next Edition**

*Shangwe News* is distributed to a target audience of black & mixed-race women of African & Caribbean descent in the UK and to other relevant and interested parties. If you would like to write an article of between 500 to 1000 words (max) or submit a poem (any theme) for the next issue of *Shangwe News*, the copy deadline date is: **20th January 2012** for the February 2012 edition. Please email your submissions to: [nicole@shangwe.com](mailto:nicole@shangwe.com)

© copyright 2009 Shangwe