

SANKOFA DANZAFRO
THE CITY OF OTHERS
Program Copy

The City of Others

Most cities are inhabited by people of different origins, cultures, and ways of understanding the world. In cities, thousands of people coexist in a defined environment, each having its own view of a common reality. In many countries, far from being a source of progress, cities can be a place of hostility, loneliness, and discrimination. *The City of Others* was created from our personal experiences of racism and oppression in our daily lives in Medellín, Colombia.

The City of Others includes traditional Colombian songs and rhythms, such as the Vallenato from the Atlantic region coastline, and dances, such as the Bullerengue (also from the Atlantic coastline) and the Currulao and Abozao dances from the Pacific coastline.

For life in a metropolis to be a positive space for constructive living and collective communities, I feel it is necessary to embrace the extended family concept prevalent in rural communities: what I own is for everyone; under my roof, there is room for someone else; if you need me, I am here; I am not the exclusive owner of what surrounds me.

The City of Others examines the lack of opportunities for the many who, for generations, have been marked by ethnic discrimination and social inequality. In Colombia, African diaspora communities and other marginalized peoples have been treated in the same dismissed manner - as second class citizens. In *The City of Others*, these communities claim political and social power, transcending racism and prejudice. This is their city - it is everyone's city.

The City of Others was created in celebration of Colombia's 159th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery and was commissioned in 2010 by the Mayor's Office of Medellín, Casa de Integración Afrocolombiana. *The City of Others* had its premiere tour to North America in the fall of 2019 with performances at The Joyce Theater; Boston Celebrity Series; the Kravis Center; and USC's Voices & Visions, among other venues. The company has since been presented by The Hopkins Center at Dartmouth; Teatro de la Ciudad Esperanza Iris, Mexico City; and the Merida Festival, Merida, MEX. The company's 20/21 North America tour dates were cancelled by the COVID19 pandemic and are being rescheduled in the 21/22 season.

- Rafael Palacios, Artistic Director, Sankofa Danzafro

Direction and Choreography: Rafael Palacios
Light and set design: Álvaro Tobón
Costumes concept: Rafael Palacios
Tour Manager: Jimena Alviar

Performers: Yndira Perea Cuesta, Juan José Luna Coha, Diego de los Rios Naranjo, Camilo Perlaza Micolta, Liliana Hurtado Hinestroza, Sandra Vanesa Murillo, Yeison Moreno Córdoba, Yesid Quejada Moreno, Davinson Palacios Mosquera, Daniela Hernández Arango, Jhoan Andrés Mosquera Ibarguen.

Music credits

- Rumberólogo
Composed by Lino Agua Limpia and Harrison Palacios
Performed by Explosión Negra
Used with permission by Gotok Music LLC
- Remolinos
Composed by José Velásquez
Performed live by Juan José Luna Coha
Used with permission by Codiscos S.A.S
- Mañana, tarde y noche
Composed and performed live by Juan José Luna Coha
- Andando pela Africa
Composed by Fernando Barba
Performed by Barbatuques
Used with the permission by MCD World Music
- Spring Waterfall
Composed by Phillip Glass and Foday Musa Suso
Performed by Jail Kunda
Used with permission by Foday Musa Suso
- Omgyjya switch 7
Composed by Richard D James
Performed by Aphex twin
Used with permission by Warp Records
- Riding the waves

Composed by Emmerson, McNally, O Lionáird, Russell, Brown
Performed by Afrocelt sound system
Used with permission by Real World Records

Duration: 1 hour

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SANKOFA DANZAFRO

We dance, more than to be seen, to be heard!

In Akan, a Ghanaian language, Sankofa means "to return to the root". More than a word, it is an African philosophy that proposes to know the past as a condition to understand the present; as a way to see the future. This thought has guided the path of the Afro-Colombian dance and music company Sankofa Danzafro. Founded by Rafael Palacios in 1997 with its home in Medellin, Colombia, Sankofa is dedicated to training and creation in dance as well as interacting with the community. Through the practice of dance, Sankofa's mission is to bridge the gaps between the many African diaspora communities in Colombia – along with other populations whose human rights have been violated. Sankofa's choreographic language searches for the poetics that are at the root of Afro dance, experienced through the frame of today. In this way, Sankofa honors both the traditional and the contemporary. Through its programs, the company nurtures community mentorship, social awareness, personal growth, and supports the sustainability of local cultures inside of the national dynamics of Colombia.

Sankofa's achievements have been noted with recognitions such as the 2008 National Dance Award to Rafael Palacios for "San Pacho ... Blessed!"; a mention in 2010 by the United Nations as a "good practice of Afro-descendant social inclusion in Latin America" with the cross-cultural collaboration "Steps in the Earth Project," (created with dancers in the Pacific, Chocó and Urabá regions and the Archipelago of San Andrés y Providencia) which resulted in the publication of a book of the same title; and by the Training of Trainers and Danza Viva Program of the Ministry of Culture between 2008 and 2016. Sankofa has a wide repertoire of works and has toured to countries such as Brazil, France, Peru, Spain, Jamaica, Burkina Faso, Canada, Uruguay, and China. The

company made its “electrifying New York debut” (NY Times) in the US invited by the Battery Dance Festival in 2015.

Rafael Palacios

Colombian choreographer, teacher and dancer, researcher of traditional, Afro-contemporary, and urban dance. His experience as a dancer in Africa and Europe, studying with Germaine Acogny and Irene Tassebedo has been the basis for the founding of Sankofa Danzafro. His creations explore social and racial inequality, ancestral knowledge and a search for a new place of Afro-Colombian culture in the Colombian society. With a trajectory of more than twenty years, his works for Sankofa Danzafro have been presented in theatres and festivals around the world, showing the diversity of afro-Colombian dance.

He has been a guest choreographer for the Celebration of the 159 years of Abolition of Slavery, in Medellin, Colombia in 2010 for which he created *The City of Others*. He was also guest choreographer for *The Summit of the Americas* (Cartagena 2012), Inauguration of the *World Games* (Cali, 2013), and for the First International Dance Biennial of Cali (Colombia, 2013). In 2008 he received the National Dance Award from the Ministry of Culture with the work *San Pacho ... Blessed!*.

Rafael Palacios has been a social activist through dance and has been committed to education of afro-descendent youth since he started his work in Colombia. *Steps on Earth*, his project of knowledge exchange among black communities in Colombia, received mention of the UN as a good practice of Afro-descendant social inclusion in Latin America (Cali, 2010). In 2018 he received the National Prize for the Arts with his work *The City of Others* awarded by the Universidad de Antioquia.

Palacios is a specialist in Epistemologies of the South of CLASCO (Latin American Council for Social Sciences) and is currently getting his master’s degree in Education and Human Rights at the Latin American Autonomous University.

Special thanks:

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