

Remembering Rex Nettleford

B/N Rex Nettleford

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Gleaner Writer

FOUR YEARS after the passing of Rex Nettleford, his memory still lingers in the hearts of many Jamaicans, but none more than those who are associated with the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the members of National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC). Both institutions are now symbols of his creativity and intellectual power.

At an event, organised by the Nettleford Foundation on Nettleford's birthday (February 3), the two institutions, along with other well-wishers, came together to honour his memory.

Through song and dance they remembered him. This was intensified by the choice of venue (The Little Theatre) that was arguably the most used canvas by the Professor.

Titled Remembering Rex, the two-part programme began with a powerful opening, Chromosome X, choreographed

by NDTC's heir apparent Marlon Simms.

The 2012 choreography was a haunting display of non-stop images of bodies in perpetual motion, walking, running, and leaping, all to the sound of steady breathing that reinforced the strength of the various movements.

Clad in short black dresses with red underlining, the dancers explored various degrees of levels, but what was most interesting was the web of fast-paced exits and entrances they wove.

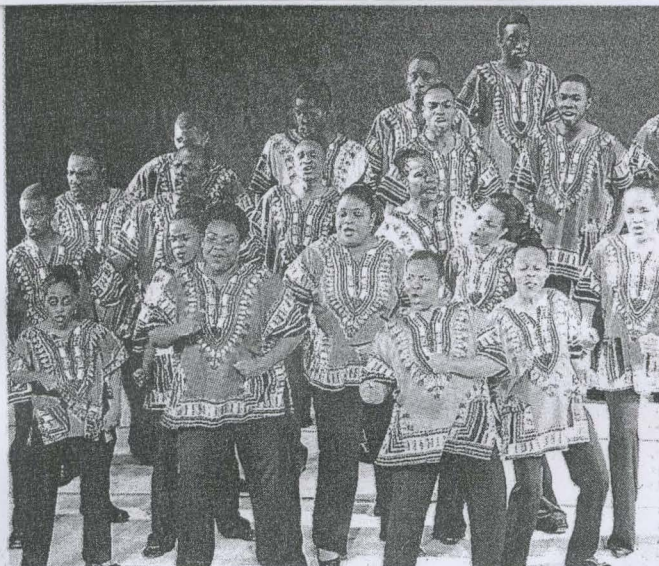
The dance was originally dedicated to the women on the Jamaican Olympic team. It ended with all the dancers falling on to the stage, exhausted.

It was followed by bare-chested Mark Phinn. Wearing a pair of tight-fitted shorts, Phinn gave a dazzling display of controlled body extensions, tugging

PLEASE SEE **REX**, C2



Dancers perform during 'Remembering Rex'.



The University Singers perform 'Survivor' during 'Remembering Rex' at The Little Theatre last Tuesday.

REX

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at the heart as he executed Jamie J. Thompson's 2013 piece, *Don't Leave Me*.

The nostalgic dance also served as a translation of Nina Simone's cover of Jacques Brel's *Ne Me Quitte Pas*.

The sombre, reflective mood of Part One of the programme was to be repeated in Bert Rose's 1997 piece, *Steal Away*.

Rose's creativity was brought to life by Kerry-Ann Henry, Alicia Glasgow, Terry-Ann Dennison, Mark Phinn and Marlon Simms.

Part Two took a walk down memory lane with two of Nettleford's works, *Dis Poem* and excerpts from *Renewal*.

Joined by the NDTC Singers, the dance was a celebration of revivalism. It was captivating and colourful and brought the full company of dancers to the stage.

Dis Poem was just as colourful. The costumes, designed by

Pansy Hassan, Bert Rose and Nettleford, seemed to represent various causes.

The UWI Singers, performing between the dances, maintained the mood and tone of each segment.

The group's first set of performances where they did *Hosanna, In Excelsis*, and *This Little Light of Mine* were reflective, the final of the trio performed by Alecia Forbes.

The UWI Singers second appearance in Part Two took the form of a visit to a wake. Abandoning more formal looking attire, the group delivered a sombre *Nine Night Suite*.

In the second section of the programme, wearing costumes made from African print, the UWI Singers also gave an entertaining rendition of *Survivor*.

There was also a medley of songs such as *We Shall Overcome* and *I Will Survive*, which showcased not only great vocals but also varied and intricate formations.

A Nettleford fan, Natoya Grant, concurred. She thought the concert was very rich.