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"The Circle Unbroken is a Hard Bop," Revival



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Get ready for **Kamilah Forbes'** brand on the revival of **Sekou Sundiata's** seminal play "**The Circle Unbroken is a Hard Bop,**" **Friday, September 27, at 7:30pm, at LIU Brooklyn, Kumble Theater.** The Hip Hop theater genius and winner of League of Professional Theatre Women's Josephine Abady Award, will direct this one-night-only engagement to feature **Carvens Lissant, Traci Tolmaire** and **Craig MuMs Grant** with choreography by **Adia Whitaker.**

The story involves three African American artists— an ex-pat dancer, a poet and a musician—who come of age in the late '60s and '70s. The reimagined and multilayered work presents a fusion of dancer, poetry, and music that promises multi-generational appeal. The question at the end of the play sums up the theatrical journey: "*What happens when you've been free too long, without freedom?*"

Both Old School and Hip-Hop generations will see a mirror effect in that the "*journeys are not unfamiliar,*" according to Forbes, a Howard University graduate who studied at the British American Drama Academy in Oxford. When asked about choreography Forbe said that dance lovers will see elements of modern (Dunham technique), Haitian folkloric and contemporary influences.

"Everyone will be struck by the consistent relevance of the characters' lives, memories and topics like identity, personality and culture," said Forbes. A **1993 NY Times review** summed it up: *"But there is nothing simple about this brief play; it is so rich it often seems about to bloom into full-scale opera."* But Forbes hinted that her version might feel a little different.

"The challenge was how to breathe life into a play that was written in the 1960s that can relate to today," said Forbes. She said that they stayed true to Sundiata's words. *"But I think what happened was that the three characters are on personal journeys. They each found connecting points and shifts in decoding the language that truly resonates with everyone today."* Forbes added: *"This production is hopeful but might feel like we are moving toward an explosion rather than an opera! There will be impact and the audience will definitely feel transformed."* The production is part of **651 ARTS**, a presenting organization dedicated to African Diasporan artists. The group marks its 25th Anniversary this year. Tickets are \$10.

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