

# THEATRE ALIVE!



**THEATRE ALIVE!** in association with **PLAYERS Theatre Ensemble** (Director Andrew Visnevski) is commissioning performance poet Joseph Coelho to make a new stage version of *The Oresteia Trilogy* by Aeschylus, the oldest surviving complete play cycle and central classic of the European theatre canon, from the viewpoint of contemporary urban youth.

The commissioning is the first phase of a long-term, ongoing cross-arts cultural project. During the writing we shall be forging partnerships and collaborative relationships with a composer, musicians, lighting and visual artists for the full exploration of the potential of the form and content of the drama. Contemporary and groundbreaking forms, rhythms and metaphors that characterise Joseph Coelho's writing will engage an audience unaccustomed to mainstream traditional classical theatre.

We aim to initiate collaboration between the writer and a composer to develop the written piece into contemporary music theatre aiming at a social/cultural fusion and applying the musical and rhythmic influences from contemporary British youth culture. Together with sound, light and visual artists we will explore ways in which the various elements, with the play and music as their basis, can fuse together and evolve into a performance piece embracing the widest span of urban culture.

Joseph Coelho writes:

“Coming from a working class culturally diverse background (my mother is Anglo Indian and my father Jamaican) I have found many relevant themes in *The Oresteia* that will strike a chord with many people in my community and beyond. I have been brought up in a climate where family life is dissonant and broken homes the norm.

As it is a classical text, I can see why so many people, especially in my community, are not familiar with the original work. It is a terrible shame that some of those who would empathise most with the themes in the three short plays of the cycle, have simply not had access to them. I believe many people will find it both revelatory and comforting that the turmoil at home and within our society today is not new, and needn't be viewed simplistically as a necessary evil, an aspect of modern, inescapable pressures.

I am very keen to create an adaptation that is not an excuse to 'ghetto-ise' a great work, and am personally enthralled, as a young black working class male, by the idea of challenging the notion that our society is only inspired by parody, or shock value, or segregated cultural heritage.”

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[www.theatrealive.org.uk](http://www.theatrealive.org.uk) : 020 7403 4405