

# GRAND UNION ORCHESTRA

## UNFORGOTTEN VOYAGES

**A large-scale Grand Union Orchestra project  
to commemorate the Windrush 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

### **The background**

At a time when the arrival of the Empire Windrush from the Caribbean and its passengers in 1948 is again in the news, this project asks the question: how did so many African-descended people arrive in the Caribbean in the first place?

The transatlantic slave trade inflicted unimaginable horror and injury on millions of Africans, and the trauma of this experience continues to haunt African-Americans to this day, four centuries later.

At the same time, they somehow managed to retain, practise and develop their ancestral traditions – customs, religion, music – in the new world to which they were transported, from the whole western coastline of Africa to Brazil, Cuba, the Caribbean and the southern states of the USA.

It is remarkable that these traditions not only survived – which speaks to an indomitable spirit – but have made an extraordinary contribution to European (indeed, global) music in so many ways.

Unforgotten Voyages aims not just to remember them, and their malign historical roots, but bring them alive in celebrating their impact and growing influence on society today - albeit a society in which Black people are still treated unequally..

### **The musicians**

This is something the Grand Union Orchestra is well-equipped to do. For nearly 40 years, we have been bringing together musicians and singers born or brought up in all major musical traditions worldwide to create original music that reflects and responds to the hopes and aspirations diverse population.

Unforgotten Voyages naturally places all our African-descended musician centre-stage, which gives it immediacy and authenticity, including:

- Nigerian singer/actor/writer Jumoké Fashola
- Caribbean British singer Davina Wright
- Singer/African drummer Jonathan André
- Ghanaian master-drummer Abass Dodoo
- Drummer/singer/dancer Ricardo Axé from Northeast Brazil
- Trumpeters Claude Deppa (South Africa) and Kevin Robinson (Jamaica)
- Caribbean British Harry Brown (trombone) and Andy Grappy (tuba)
- Saxophonist Tony Kofi (second generation from Ghana)
- South African born Brian Abrahams (drums)

together with other core musicians from the Grand Union Orchestra, under the direction of composer Tony Haynes.