

COBA REFERENCE: AFRO CARIBBEAN V.S. CARIBBEAN INDIGENOUS FOLK

BY: BAKARI EDDISON LINDSAY, M.A. B.ED

Why does COBA (Collective Of Black Artists) claim to present Caribbean Indigenous Folk dance and not Afro-Caribbean dance traditions? Simply because the term Afro-Caribbean is a linguistic word



developed by scholars in the early 60's, and does not represent the complexities of Caribbean dance culture.

According to Webster's Dictionary the word "afro", sometimes called a "natural" or shortened to "fro", is a hairstyle in which the hair extends out from the head like a halo, cloud or ball", while Caribbean is defined "as of or relating to the Caribs, the eastern and southern West Indies, or the Caribbean Sea." The term "Afro-Caribbean" was loosely used by scholars to overall classify the blends of African and other non-African cultures. So therefore, based

on this classification Caribbean dance from Trinidad and Tobago and many other islands would simply be a blend of African tradition and some other culture, which is simply inaccurate.

Amerindian peoples have existed in Trinidad for as long as 6,000 years before the arrival of Columbus, and numbered at least 40,000 at the time of Spanish settlement in 1592. [Most] of Trinidad was populated by several Amerindian tribes who were referred to by various names such as Yaio, Nepuyo, Chaima, Warao, Kalipuna, Carinepogoto, Garini, Aruaca. Trinidad [was] also a transit point in the Caribbean network of Amerindian trade and exchange. Amerindian words and names [of] place have survive into the present: the Caroni and Oropouche rivers; the Tamana and Aripo mountains; places such as Arima, Paria, Arouca, Caura, Tunapuna, Tacarigua, Couva, Mucurapo, Chaguanas, Carapichaima, Guaico, Mayaro, Guayaguayare; flora such as cassava, maize, cacao, tobacco, and fauna such as maniocou and agouti.

However it is the people and their culture, which were eradicated with the introduction for the French slave trade.

COBA REFERENCE: AFRO CARIBBEAN V.S. CARIBBEAN INDIGENOUS FOLK

BY: BAKARI EDDISON LINDSAY, M.A. B.ED

Caribbean Indigenous Folk dance as it exists now and for hundreds of years, is not a simple blend of African and Amerindian culture, although there are some minor exchanges. The wealth of dances and their music that Trinidad and Tobago shares with the world and is presented by COBA, Collective Of Black Artists is sometimes African, or East Indian, influenced by Spanish, French, and British, through dress, musical instrumentation and history, which does not make it Afro-Anything but Indigenously Caribbean.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahye, Molly. Golden Heritage-The Dance in Trinidad and Tobago. Petit Valley, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago: Heritage Cultures Ltd, 1978.

Trinidad and Tobago Festivals. 24 Mar. 2004 <<http://www.trinbagoinfo.com/trinbagoinfo/festivals/index.htm>>.

Lewis-Warner, Maureen. Guinea's Other Suns, The African Dynamic in Trinidad Culture. Dover, Massachusetts: The Majority Press, 1991.

<http://www.kacike.org/srcc/essays.html>

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/afro>

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/caribbean>