



### The Passion of Remembrance

Directed by: Maureen Blackwood, Isaac Julien

©: Sankofa Film and Video

Financially Assisted by: Channel Four,

The GLC Police Support Committee

Producer: Martina Attile

Production Managers: Martina Attile,

Nadine Marsh-Edwards

Continuity: Noeleen Grattan

Written by: Maureen Blackwood, Isaac Julien

Photography (Speakers' Drama): Steven Bernstein

Photography (Maggie's Drama): Nina Kellgren

Focus Puller (Speaker's Drama): Derek Little

Focus Puller (Maggie's Drama): Maggie Gormley

Gaffer (Maggie's Drama): Nuala Campbell

Grip (Speakers Drama): Jimmy Goom

Grips (Maggie's Drama): Mick Duffield,

Martin McCullagh

Editor: Nadine Marsh-Edwards

Assistant Editors: Maureen Blackwood,

Stella Franceskides

Visualiser: Laurence Dorman

Titles: Les Latimer Film & Video

Camera Equipment: Oculus

Lighting Equipment: Film & TV Services

Laboratory: Technicolor

Music Written and Arranged by: Tony Rémy

Sound Recordist (Speakers/Maggie's Drama):

Diana Ruston

Boom Operator (Speakers/Maggie's Drama):

Ronald Bailey

Dubbing Mixer: David Old

Sound Editor: Virginia Heath

Cast:

*Speakers Drama*

Anni Domingo (*female speaker*)

Joseph Charles (*male speaker*)

*Maggie's Drama*

Antonia Thomas (*Maggie Baptiste*)

Carlton Chance (*Gary*)

Jim Findley (*Tony Baptiste*)

Ram John Holder (*Benjy Baptiste*)

Shiela Mitchell (*Glory Baptiste*)

Tania Morgan (*Tonia*)

Gary McDonald (*Michael*)

Janet Palmer (*Louise*)

Kelvin Omard (*boy in youth club*)

Christopher Tajah (*boy in youth club*)

Michael Hughes (*senior officer*)

Simon Binns (*younger officer*)

Andrew Powell, David Doyle, Tim Brennan (*youths*)

Marcelle Williams (*Mrs Campbell*)

Derek Blackwood, Maureen Blackwood,

Osaze Ehibor (*voices off screen*)

UK 1986 83 mins Digital

### Step Forward Youth

Director: Menelik Shabazz

Production Company: Kuumba Black Arts

Producer: Menelik Shabazz

Script: Menelik Shabazz, David Kinoshi

Director of Photography: David Kinoshi

Photography: David Kinoshi

Editor: David Kinoshi

Sound Recording: Albert Bailey

UK 1977 29 mins 16mm

The screening on Wed 29 Oct will include  
an introduction

### Big Screen Classics

# The Passion of Remembrance + Step Forward Youth

Almost 40 years after it was first made, the Sankofa collective's *The Passion of Remembrance* remains salient. The film is a grand tapestry filled with allusions to the intersectional concerns, motives and desires of different subsections of the Black community. It comprises two concurrent narratives: the first is a story about disagreements in a Black British family; the second takes place in an abstract ideological plane created to openly express each character's political will.

Founded in 1983, amid the advent of the Workshop declaration (an active call-out by significant stakeholders to support the diversification of the independent film scene in the UK), the Sankofa (an Akan word meaning 'to retrieve') Film and Video Collective was founded by a group of creatives from across the African, Caribbean and Asian diaspora: Isaac Julien, Nadine Marsh-Edwards, Maureen Blackwood, Martina Attile and Robert Crusz. They were a group of London art school students who sought to create space for the depiction of a multitude of Black experiences in film.

In late 1984, the group was finalising a series of screenings and talks entitled 'Power/Control'. Deciding that fictional drama was a more accessible medium for making an outwardly political film, co-directors Blackwood and Julien wrote a script that blended two perspectives and influences: Blackwood addressed the history of activism and the role of Black women; while Julien explored the special relationship between the cultural spaces of gay Black men on either side of the Atlantic (a theme he would develop in 1989's *Looking for Langston*).

The late 1970s was the height of Britain's Black women's movement. The visits of Malcolm X and Stokeley Carmichael in the mid-60s had inspired young Black Britons to form the Black British Panther movement. When the Panthers disbanded in the early 70s, one of the most prominent Black feminist voices, Olive Morris, founded the Brixton Black Women's Group (BBWG). This in turn would spearhead the nationwide proliferation of Black women's groups, such as Camden Black Sisters, of which Blackwood herself became a member. As she told *Sight and Sound* in 2020: 'I wanted there to be a space within the narrative that touched on some of the Camden Black Sisters' stories and recognised that Black women were mainly absent from the narratives of the 50s and 60s.'

As bell hooks said of *The Passion of Remembrance*, it forms an 'oppositional gaze', in which Black women feature as definitive authors offering their positions of memory. In the movie, these perspectives are advocated by the powerful sardonic voice of Anni Domingo. Through her role as the female speaker, she drives the ongoing conversation on the abstract plane, which is intercut throughout the film and undergirds the conflict between Maggie and a generation of older men in her family who belittle her perspective.

As noted by Judah Attile in *British Film Black Cinema I*, the device of the abstract plane takes inspiration from Ralph Ellison's 1952 book *Invisible Man*. It's a metaphor for how the female speaker brings the male speaker into an open space and new possibilities by challenging his thoughts. This reflects the under-considered theoretical contribution to Black movements by Black women.

Back in Britain in the 1980s, generational differences between Maggie and her family are illustrated by a soundclash contrasting the traditional calypso in the foyer and the funk/R&B that thuds off the record player. This dissonance is

## Big Screen Classics

### One Way or Another

De cierta manera  
Mon 20 Oct 18:20; Sun 2 Nov 18:20;  
Tue 4 Nov 20:30

### Black Girl

La noire de...  
Mon 20 Oct 20:45; Thu 30 Oct 18:30;  
Fri 28 Nov 12:30

### Touki Bouki

Tue 21 Oct 18:30; Tue 11 Nov 20:50

### Medicine for Melancholy

Wed 22 Oct 18:20 (+ intro by film curator and writer  
Jonathan Ali); Thu 6 Nov 18:15

### Crooklyn

Wed 22 Oct 20:30; Sat 1 Nov 20:40;  
Sat 8 Nov 20:45; Fri 21 Nov 18:10

### Killer of Sheep

Thu 23 Oct 20:50; Tue 28 Oct 21:00;  
Sun 16 Nov 18:30; Thu 20 Nov 12:20

### A Different Image + Perfect Image

Fri 24 Oct 18:20; Wed 5 Nov 18:10

### Pressure

Sat 25 Oct 20:30; Fri 7 Nov 18:10; Fri 14 Nov 14:40;  
Sun 23 Nov 18:15

### Soleil Ô

Sun 26 Oct 14:30; Sat 15 Nov 20:35;  
Mon 24 Nov 20:30

### Mangrove

Mon 27 Oct 20:30; Sat 22 Nov 17:30

### The Passion of Remembrance

#### + Step Forward Youth

Wed 29 Oct 18:00 (+ intro); Tue 25 Nov 20:45

### Atlantics

Atlantique  
Fri 31 Oct 20:40; Sun 9 Nov 18:30;  
Tue 18 Nov 14:40; Sat 29 Nov 12:00

### Daughters of the Dust

Mon 3 Nov 18:15; Sun 30 Nov 12:20

### Ethnic Notions + Looking for Langston

Mon 10 Nov 20:45; Wed 19 Nov 18:10 (+ intro)

### Saint Omer

Wed 12 Nov 17:45 (+ intro by Xavier Alexandre  
Pillai, BFI TV Programmer); Mon 17 Nov 14:30;  
Thu 27 Nov 20:35

### Haitian Corner

Thu 13 Nov 20:55; Wed 26 Nov 18:10 (+ intro)

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further crystallised when Maggie's father discovers a flyer for Paradise Garage. His accusatory denunciation of 'gayness' and 'nastiness' is casually dismissed by Maggie, who says they go sometimes.

The transplantation of the landmark New York gay club into the film's London setting powerfully relates to the influence of American subcultures on Britain's nightlife. The influence of Larry Levan, house and disco highlights the interconnectedness of Black cultural life, even as the film grounds the characters' lived experiences in distinctly Black British areas. The nightlife scenes capture the spots frequented by second and third-generation Black Britons, including the famous Dougie's, a central spot for Black Londoners.

Also featuring references to African American art and textual extracts by Malcolm X and June Jordan, ultimately *The Passion of Remembrance* advocates for transatlantic cultural exchange. Suitably, the BFI National Archive's new 4K remastering of this landmark film, undertaken with the directors and cinematographer Nina Kellgren from the original 16mm negative and magnetic soundtrack, will premiere concurrently in London and New York.

Xavier Alexandre Pillai, [bfi.org.uk](https://bfi.org.uk), 4 October 2022

## Menelik Shabazz on 'Step Forward Youth'

*Step Forward Youth* was my very first film back in 1977. I was in my early twenties just out of film school with my partner in crime David Kinoshi. David's presence, encouragement and talents were key in me making this film. He was both cameraman and editor (some of you might remember him as an actor in the movie *Pressure*).

I had the idea to do this film to counter the negative targeting of Black British Youth by the media. Then, the catchphrase was 'mugging' – today it's 'gun crime'. We lived in the shadows of Enoch Powell's speech predicting Black immigration would lead to conflict and 'blood on our streets'. I was living in another reality of Malcolm X, Black Panthers, Angela Davis and George Jackson which was shaping my views about the world I wanted to change.

The title came from a reggae tune of the same name by Prince Jazzbo. I wanted this film to be relevant to my community more than looking for outside recognition.

In those days we were shooting on raw 16mm film stock which was expensive, but we were not daunted. With the help of a few donors we managed to gather enough to give encouragement.

The main funder was David's uncle who was a fairly rich Nigerian. He owned an apartment in St Johns Wood, London. To get his money we had to turn up at his apartment at 10am regularly. He kept us waiting for hours while he had a bath and talked on the phone. His display of power didn't go down too well with us till eventually we got tired of playing his game.

Anyway, he coughed some of the money but it wasn't enough so I had to make a decision about whether we should stop and wait to get more money or keep going. I decided to keep going – it was the most important decision of my life – aged 21.

With a few favours, we managed to edit and complete the film and Uncle came in with some more money that helped us through the film procession costs. Despite the way he treated us, he wanted to support David.

What was sad was that in the same year we completed the film, 1977, David died of sickle cell anaemia which was a real blow. He was so talented – a sad loss... This film is dedicated to his memory.

[menelikshabazz.co.uk](https://menelikshabazz.co.uk)