

CELEBRATING 18 YEARS OF

**ALFRED  
FAGON  
AWARD**  
2014

SINCE 1997

Supported by The Peggy Ramsay Foundation

Thursday 20 November 2014

The Dorfman, National Theatre

**National  
Theatre**



Past winners of the Alfred Fagon Award for Best New Play of the Year photographed by Richard H. Smith at Theatre Royal Stratford East on 27 June 2014.

Linda Brogan (joint winner 2001), Shenagh Cameron (1998), Lorna French (2006), Levi David Addai (2011), Diana Nneka Atuona (2013), Paula B. Stanic (2008), Trevor Williams (2002), Marcia Layne (2003), Oladipo Agboluaje (2009).

**“The Peggy Ramsay Foundation spends its income in helping writers for the stage. Since the Alfred Fagon Award came into existence the Foundation has provided funds for its awards. The Award’s encouragement for the ethnic writers it supports has been a valuable and productive achievement and the Foundation is honoured to have been able to assist in that work. We hope to be able to continue contributing to the Award and its important success.”**

**G Laurence Harbottle, Trustee, The Peggy Ramsay Foundation**

**“The Alfred Fagon Award has made a unique contribution to the development of a diverse repertoire of writers and plays over the past 18 years; many of the past winners of the Award have established themselves as important voices within the culture of this country. The trail blazed by Alfred Fagon and his contemporaries continues to inspire and motivate new generations of creative artists. The National Theatre is delighted to support the Award by hosting the reception for the winning author and the rehearsed reading of the winning play.”**

**Sebastian Born, Associate Director (Literary), National Theatre**

18TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALFRED FAGON AWARD

THURSDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2014

THE DORFMAN, NATIONAL THEATRE

Presentation Ceremony  
Outstanding Contribution to Writing Award  
Best New Play of the Year Award

Shortlist for Best New Play of the Year:

**ANNAWON'S SONG**  
BY **BEVERLEY ANDREWS**

**CUTTIN' IT**  
BY **CHARLENE JAMES**

**DARE TO DO**  
BY **MARK NORFOLK**

**CROWNING GLORY**  
BY **SOMALIA SEATON**

Presented by The Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin.

The Award of £6,000 for Best New Play of the Year  
is given in memory of the writer Alfred Fagon (1937-1986).  
This Award is funded by The Peggy Ramsay Foundation.

SELECTION COMMITTEE FOR BEST NEW PLAY OF THE YEAR 2014:  
Anton Phillips (Chair), Brian Walters, Olusola Oyeleye,  
Sheelagh Killeen and Havana Wellings-Longmore.

THE REHEARSED READING OF THE WINNING PLAY IS DIRECTED BY OLA INCE

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>PLAYWRIGHT / PLAY</b>	<b>PRESENTERS</b>
1997	Roy Williams / Starstruck	Mustapha Matura / Playwright
1998	Shenagh Cameron / A Pocket in the Sky	Sir Trevor McDonald / Broadcaster
1999	Grant Buchanan-Marshall / The Prayer Sheila White / Maids	Rt Hon Chris Smith MP / Politician, Arts Minister
2000	Adeshegun Ikoli / Surprise Surprise	Bonnie Greer / Writer, Broadcaster
2001	Linda Brogan / The Well Penny Saunders / The Never Never	Clive Rowe / Actor
2002	Trevor Williams / Talkin' Loud	Hugh Quarshie / Actor
2003	Marcia Layne / Off Camera	Baroness Valerie Amos / Politician
2004	Michael Abbensetts / The Good Doctor's Son	Roy Williams / Playwright
2005	Michael Bhim / Daydreams of Hailey	Professor Stuart Hall / Academic, Broadcaster
2006	Lorna French / Safe House	Diane Abbott MP / Politician, Broadcaster
2007	Allia V Oswald / Dirty Water	Don Warrington / Actor
2008	Paula B Stanic / What's Lost	Yvonne Brewster OBE / Director
2009	Oladipo Agboluaje / Iya-Ile	Diana Athill OBE / Literary Editor, Author
2010	Rachel De-lahay / SW11 Roy Williams / Sucker Punch	Winsome Pinnock / Playwright
2011	Levi David Addai / Blacklands	Mona Hammond OBE / Actor
2012	Michaela Coel / Chewing Gum Dreams	Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon OBE
2013	Diana Nneka Atuona / Liberian Girl	Professor Gus John / Educationalist
2014	And the winner is...	The Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin Speaker's Chaplain, House of Commons and Priest Vicar at Westminster Abbey, Chaplain to the Queen



Alfred Fagon lived in Clarendon Jamaica, Nottingham, Bristol and London. He was a boxing champion, a welder, an actor, poet, and playwright.

After his untimely death in 1986 his friends held a memorial evening at Tricycle Theatre to commemorate his life and work. The donations collected at the memorial formed the basis of the Alfred Fagon Award to recognise Black British playwrights from the Caribbean.

The first award supported by Arts Council England and The Peggy Ramsay Foundation was presented to Roy Williams in 1997. The Peggy Ramsay Foundation continues to support the Award and the prize this year for the winning writer is £6,000. The Award has widened its remit and is now also open to writers who are of African descent.

A bust of Alfred created by David G Mutasa was erected in St Paul's, Bristol. Bristol keeps his name alive; in September 2013 the Bristol Old Vic dedicated an evening to him where a full rehearsed reading of his play 11 Josephine House was performed.

On 26th October 2006 we celebrated the ten year anniversary of the Award at The Royal Court Theatre in London. A reading of Alfred's play 11 Josephine House preceded the Award ceremony. Lorna French was presented with the prize for her winning play Safe House by Diane Abbott MP.

Find out more about Alfred and his work on the web from links on our website  
[www.alfredfagonaward.co.uk](http://www.alfredfagonaward.co.uk)

**“2014 has been the most important year in my writing career to date and I know that it all came from winning the Alfred Fagon Award. It has boosted my confidence and opened the doors to the opportunities I have long dreamed of.”**

**Diana Nneka Atuona, winner 2013**

**“I’m not 100% certain it wasn’t this award that got the Royal Court to re-read my script. I am 100% certain it was this award that made me think I can do it. Thank you.”**

**Rachel De-lahay, joint winner 2010**

**“The Alfred Fagon Award has raised my profile to no extent. It isn’t in just the affirmation it lends one as a writer but also as a writing tutor, and as an expert, being asked to comment on matters on playwriting in general and on black writing in particular.”**

**Oladipo Agboluaje, winner 2009**

**“Winning the Alfred Fagon Award was what really got me started. It encouraged me to write more and gave me the time and opportunity to do it.”**

**Paula B Stanic, winner 2008**

**“Winning the Alfred Fagon Award for my first play remains one of the defining moments of my writing career. It gave me the confidence to pursue writing more seriously and many years and plays later, I remain very honoured and proud to have received such important recognition for my work.”**

**Marcia Layne, winner 2003**

**“The Alfred Fagon Award is a stark reminder that new plays are the DNA of all drama publishers’ lists. Publication ensures that play texts remain visible and accessible, to be rediscovered and revived for future generations. Increasing public awareness of Caribbean and African born playwrights is an essential part of this work. Alfred Fagon’s plays are now preserved on Oberon Books’ list along with a growing number of Black British playwrights. We are ready and willing to consolidate these ideals in our printed editions and e-books.”**

**James Hogan, Founder Publisher, Oberon Books**

**“Afridiziak Theatre News is a huge supporter of the Alfred Fagon Awards and looks forward to its continued success in supporting the next generation of playwrights.”**

**Sophia A Jackson, Editor/Founder, Afridiziak Theatre News**

**“Plays are intentionally ephemeral in that they are written for their time; in this sense, they are truly here today and gone tomorrow. The existence of the Alfred Fagon Award ensures public attention for plays (and playwrights) who, just like Fagon himself, might otherwise have disappeared too soon.”**

**Winsome Pinnock (Chair of AFA Selection Committee 2010-2012)**

**Head of Department, Creative Writing, Kingston University**

“Being on the selection committee is both an enjoyable and frustrating position. It’s great to read and discuss the longlist of plays which have been selected, but also frustrating as it’s often a very difficult decision to pick one play over another.

Narrative arc and character development are two of the main qualities I look for in a script, and over the years, I’d say Rachel De-lahay’s, ‘The Westbridge’ (previously titled SW11) is the play that’s stood out for me.

The award has proved a successful avenue for black British writers trying to break into, or establish themselves in the theatre landscape. Along with the likes of Talawa Theatre company and Eclipse Theatre, the Alfred Fagon Award is a positive and effective influence on the diversity of British theatre.”

Brian Walters, Deputy Literary Manager, National Theatre

“Writers carry a great deal of responsibility. They are the chroniclers of our times - past and present, of our values, loves, hates and so on. As a producer, director, and Chair of the Selection Committee, I always recall the words of Professor Lloyd Richards. He was a Jamaican/Canadian who became Dean of Yale University School of Drama, and a multi-award winning director. He would tell his students at Yale to imagine stopping a woman on her way home after a long day at work, carrying groceries to cook dinner for her family, and say to her, “Forget whatever you plan to do tonight, come to the theatre to see my play because it is more important than anything else you have to do.” When I produce a play, or read a script, I think about that woman and the responsibility I owe to her. In the three years I have been reading plays for the Awards, it has been notable that the writers have tackled a range of topics with seriousness and a desire to raise awareness of issues germane to our lives. The number of writers, both established and newcomers, who submit plays is exciting, but ultimately disappointing in that we can only have one winner. The Alfred Fagon Award is a beacon signaling writers to write, re-write, excel at it, and come get the prize.”

Anton Phillips, Chair of Selection Committee 2013/14



**“I congratulate the Alfred Fagon Awards and recognize the effort they have made in identifying the achievement of Black British playwrights of Caribbean and African descent. I am proud to know that the Alfred Fagon Awards exist and wish them continued success.”**

**Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon OBE (Presenter 2012)**

**“This Award helps to emphasise the diversity, the richness, and the exuberance of Black British playwriting. The Award goes from strength to strength. So does the quality of the work it celebrates.”**

**Chris Smith, Rt Hon Lord Smith of Finsbury,  
former Secretary of State for Culture (Presenter 1999)**

**“The Alfred Fagon award stands as a mark of achievement, a beacon for Black British writers, shining a light on the path forward. Talawa Theatre Company has been a consistent supporter of the Alfred Fagon Award and we’ve been proud of our association. The importance of the Alfred Fagon Award within the industry is undoubted. The award is a mark of quality, showcasing an outstanding list of nominees, runners up and winners. Long may it continue.”**

**Michael Buffong, Artistic Director, Talawa Theatre Company**

**“The Royal Court is a longstanding supporter of this prestigious award, and we are proud to be presenting the previous winner Diana Nneka Atuona’s LIBERIAN GIRL. It is our sincerest wish that our landscape of writers is as diverse as the Britain in which we live today, which is why our relationship with the Alfred Fagon Award is so vital. For the Royal Court to maintain its position at the forefront of British theatre it is imperative that we seek out, nurture and programme the voices and stories of Black British writers to the highest standard.”**

**Vicky Featherstone, Artistic Director, Royal Court Theatre**

“I am very proud of the Tricycle’s long association with the Alfred Fagon Award. I remember Roy Williams’s play *Starstruck* won the first Award and it was the first play I directed at the Tricycle. The award has been very important in the support, growth and nurturing of Black British Writing. It continues to be vital as those voices still need to be heard loudly and clearly in theatres up and down this country.”

Indhu Rubasingham, Artistic Director, Tricycle Theatre

“Alfred loved John Milton, he talked about him a lot. He was a strong man who had seen tough times, he wasn’t at all religiose or romantic. But I think he thought *PARADISE LOST* was in some way a key to getting back to Eden. That’s what he thought our project as writers should be: getting back to Eden. He had a plan for a great meeting at his ancestral home in Jamaica. I think in some way he was imagining a horde of ecstatic playwrights disarming the guarding angel of his flaming sword and busting back into the garden...Oh! I just saw him in my mind’s eye and he laughed. After all these years, I still miss him so. It’s great that the Award reminds people of him.”

Howard Brenton, Playwright and Screenwriter

“At a time when it is becoming increasingly difficult for minority voices to be heard on our stages and screens on their own terms; it is refreshing to know that the Alfred Fagon Award continues to open doors and kickstart careers. Something that is essential for British Theatre.”

Topher Campbell, Artistic Director, The Red Room  
Chair ITC (Independent Theatre Council)

“Funny, irreverent, talented Alfred walked on the wild side. One can only hazard a guess at what his reaction would have been to the continuing inspiration of this award: so many years, still going strong, getting stronger. My guess is he would have had one of his explosive belly laughs followed by, “Is joke you a’ mek?”. Often ideas created by one generation do not inspire the next. It is a great joy to see people new to the Award, young and sometimes not so young, getting caught up in the magic, always remembering those whose generosity have made the prize possible. Long may this continue.”

Yvonne Brewster OBE, Director, Trustee

“I think Alfred would be very amazed to see how well the Award in his name, has flourished and kept going for 18 years! 58 submissions this year alone. We regularly see many new writers emerging, as well as the ones who have kept faith and continued to submit their new plays to us at the A.F.A. It is hard to keep pace with how they are all doing, and wonderful when one of the winning or shortlisted plays gets an airing on a London stage and in theatres across the country. This Award is for them - the keepers of the flame from the Caribbean and Africa - rich stories indeed! We know that this very particular Award has placed itself firmly in the cultural calendar of the UK and as each year goes by we hope it continues to grow in stature. In the last few years the winning plays have been staged by the National Theatre, Royal Court and Tricycle Theatre demonstrating that we have truly come of age.”

Sheelagh Killeen Rees, Trustee & Treasurer



**Members of the Black British theatre industry join the past winners of the Alfred Fagon Award for Best New Play of the Year photographed by Richard H. Smith at Theatre Royal Stratford East on 27 June 2014.**

**Front row (l-r) Pauline Walker, Simeilia Hodge-Dallaway, Paulette Randall, Linda Brogan, Levi David Addai, Shenagh Cameron, Lorna French, Marcia Layne, Paula B. Stanic, Oladipo Agboluaje, Trevor Williams, Diana Nneka Atuona and Sheelagh Killeen.**

**Second row (l-r) Sophia Jackson, Mustapha Matura, Zodwa Nyoni, Dawn Walton, Dominic Armstrong, Akua Gyamfi, Beverley Andrews, Nick Makoha, Juliet Gilkes-Romero, Linden Walcott-Burton and Ruel Rowe.**

**Back row (l-r) Anton Phillips, Amanda Huxtable, Maxine Kolaru, Patricia Cumper MBE, Tyrone Huggins, Michael Buffong, George Matheson, Fernando Oliviera, Norman Bailey and Dawn Reid.**

“Standing amongst the talented group of theatre folk, I am struck by the potential talent and how amazed Alfred would have been, at the great effect of the award, the encouragement and focus it gives to the black theatre community, from small acorns, etc., long may it continue.”

Mustapha Matura, Playwright

“I was so honoured to be asked to take part in this historic photo shoot with many of my theatrical heroes. And a welcome reminder that British Theatre is far more ethnically diverse then it sometimes appears to be.”

Beverly Andrews, Playwright

“Turning up on the day of this historic photo shoot was humbling. To be in and amongst legendary African Caribbean literary greats and renowned artistic talent absolutely validated that the work The British Blacklist team is doing alongside all the other organisations, creators, and artists involved in the Black Arts movement. It is important and very necessary.”

Akua Gyamfi, Founder The British BlackList

“As a new writer, shortlisted twice for the Award, I'm honoured to be part of a continuing history and legacy of Black creativity in Britain.”

Max Quintyne-Kolaru, Playwright

“I was glad that several had made the journey from the regions to be there, including me. It confirmed the importance of this event for connecting us all together.”

Tyrone Huggins, Actor and Playwright

“I travelled from Yorkshire to the Alfred Fagon inaugural photo shoot and joined fellow theatre directors in championing the writers who had won the Alfred Fagon Award over the past 18 years. Despite the many hurdles along the way for Black theatre makers it was a powerful testament to the talent and tenacity here in the UK.”

Amanda Huxtable, Theatre Director  
Co-Artistic Director, Hidden Gems Productions

“A photoshoot is a photoshoot, what was wonderful was the conversations with the younger generation artists. How far they've come made me think of Sidney Poitier's: I am a man not a black man like his dad. Amazing.”

Linda Brogan (joint winner 2001)

THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS OLD AND NEW:

THE PEGGY RAMSAY FOUNDATION

HARRIET CRUICKSHANK, ALFRED FAGON'S AGENT

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FOR WRITERS**



**TRUSTEES/ADVISORS TO THE AWARD:**

**Yvonne Brewster OBE**

**James Hogan**

**Oscar James**

**Sheelagh Killeen**

**Mustapha Matura**

**Roland Rees**

**Paul Stephenson OBE**

**Graham Whybrow**

**CREATIVE PRODUCTION 2014:**

**Pauline Walker, PDW Productions**

**PDW**  
Productions

# ALFRED FAGON AWARD

**COMING IN 2015**

**I write, I live**

Bush Theatre, 23 February 2015

this is the first event in The Alfred Fagon Series of fundraisers

**Annual photo-shoot**

summer 2015, Theatre Royal Stratford East

**The Audience Award**

a new award, presented at The Alfred Fagon Award, November 2015



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Alfred Fagon Award

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[www.alfredfagonaward.co.uk](http://www.alfredfagonaward.co.uk)

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