

TONIGHT'S CONCERT

Friday 19 November 2021 7.30–8.55pm
Barbican

Soweto Kinch *White Juju* (world premiere) *

Lee Reynolds conductor

Soweto Kinch saxophone & vocals

Rick Simpson piano

Nick Jurd bass

Gregory Hutchinson drums

Part of the **EFG London Jazz Festival**

* Commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra and Serious, supported as part of the **Help Musicians UK's** Giant Steps scheme and **Cockayne Grant for the Arts**.

SERIOUS

Tonight's performance is being live streamed on **Live from the Barbican**.

barbican

Welcome



Kathryn McDowell CBE DL
LSO Managing Director

A warm welcome to this LSO concert, part of the EFG London Jazz Festival. Tonight we are joined by saxophonist, composer and MC Soweto Kinch, a remarkable jazz musician who we have had the pleasure of working with for a number of years. In 2019, a quartet of LSO musicians were involved in a performance at Earth of *The Black Peril*, a work co-commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra, Serious and the University of Hull, which reflected

on a 100-year history of racial conflict – and momentous social change – after the Armistice Declaration in 1918.

Two years later, *White Juju* builds on *The Black Peril* project, taking events of 2020 as a point of departure. Through a unique melding of jazz, hip hop and classical music with extra-musical elements of film and spoken word, this piece confronts us with challenging and often uncomfortable questions.

This new work – co-commissioned by the LSO and Serious, and supported as a part of Help Musicians UK's Giant Steps scheme and Cockayne Grant for the Arts – receives its world premiere tonight, conducted by Lee Reynolds, with whom Soweto Kinch has worked closely on orchestrations. The performance is also being live streamed via the Live from the Barbican platform, and recorded for LSO Live.

We look forward to sharing this performance with you.

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Please switch off all phones. Photography and audio/video recording are not permitted during the performance.

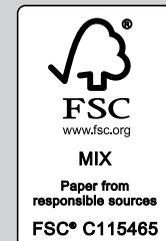
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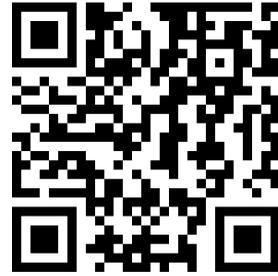


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Behind White Juju by Soweto Kinch

Last summer, following on from *The Black Peril*, I visited many sites of the 1919–21 British race riots in my #BlackPeril2020 tour. Working within the limitations of quarantine, musicians, dancers and I created bespoke socially-distanced performances in Hull, Salford, Liverpool, Cardiff, Newport and London. This tour of deserted British city centres meant we were able to view the myriad statues, bizarre symbols and flags festooned from rooftops from a completely different perspective.

Each visit was revelatory. The diffuse effects of this 'sorcery' were suddenly much easier to see. As debates around singing *Rule Britannia*, Meghan, the 'wokerati' and Ashley Banjo's ITV performance raged, I was simultaneously discovering British port cities had deliberately erased all evidence of their century-old black working population. Assailed by clickbait presenting Black Lives Matter as a radical new imported Marxism, I was simultaneously reading stories of historic police brutality extending back 103 years in Salford and Liverpool.

As councillor Gaynor Legall in Tiger Bay, Cardiff showed (herself having a direct link to the 1919 Cardiff race riots) there has never been a time when there weren't large black populations working and living in Britain creating much of its wealth and receiving little to no credit.

At the same time as observing the denial of black contributions, I became fascinated by the ways in which architecture and civic space sub-communicated racial codes. Imitation Elgin marbles adorned hotel entrances, gratuitous flags outside dormant pie shops, and colossal statues seemed to still exert an almost spellbinding authority over our actions, centuries after they were built.

Arcane ceremonies, statues and symbols as well as a deeply racialised view of British identity still occupy a prime place in the national psyche. However, now combined with the new-fangled power of social media, it reached a hyper-toxic zenith over the past year. Christmas adverts featuring a couple of black people cause a collective meltdown. Everyday bizarre stories seem to assail the senses, causing you to question the nature of reality. Who is trustworthy? Who is the enemy? Is it all just in my head?

The 2020 tour and subsequent research left me with more questions. How did a unicorn make its way to my passport? Why the national obsessions with flags, beer and re-opening pubs? Do the almost cliched tales of black suffering and unjust incarceration make us passively accept rather than challenge the status quo?

THE BLACK PERIL

Premiered at Earth (Hackney) in 2019, accompanied by an album release of the same name, Soweto Kinch's body of work *The Black Peril* was inspired by the race riots of 1919.



The Black Peril
Studio album by Soweto Kinch

musicglue.com/soweto-kinch

White Juju (world premiere)

Soweto Kinch

Soweto Kinch
saxophone & vocals
Rick Simpson piano
Nick Jurd bass
Gregory Hutchinson drums

- 1 Dawn
- 2 The Old Normal
- 3 March of the Unicorns
- 4 Behind the Myth
- 5 Curated Chaos
- 6 Sanctuary
- 7 The Natural Order
- 8 Tall Tales of Yesteryore
- 9 The Eternal
- 10 Clarity



2020–21



74 minutes

Music and lyrics by
Soweto Kinch

Orchestrations by
Soweto Kinch and
Lee Reynolds

Programme note by
Soweto Kinch

Soweto Kinch introduces us to the inspiration and creation of *White Juju*:

White Juju is an artistic response to a year of pandemic, racial animus and culture wars, inspired by events as diverse as Covid-19, Black Lives Matter protests and the toppling of statues. The music melds jazz and hip hop with classical music: drawing broad inspiration from European folklore, the African Diaspora and toxic national myths creating a uniquely contemporary tone poem.

Written for both jazz ensemble and chamber orchestra, *White Juju* references everything from bird song to unicorns, police brutality, 18th-century Baroque and the black Pentecostal church. It draws a sonic trail through the past surreal year of lockdown, playfully creating danceable and layered works, intended to provoke thought and break through an old form of divisive sorcery.

HOW WHITE JUJU BEGAN

The piece began as a series of memoirs and essays responding to virulent culture wars during 2020 and following a tour of historic British sites.

#BlackPeril2020 was an online festival created as venues and performers faced an uncertain future during the first lockdown. I visited a number of British cities with a small group of musicians and dancers creating socially distanced artistic responses, commemorating the race riots of 1919–21. We travelled to working class communities

often excluded from jazz and ‘the arts’ by exorbitant ticket prices or perceived elitism, and often still defined by immigrant populations living precariously 100 years later. We saw evidence of a toxic nationalism etched into the civic architecture, statues of powerful colonialists and gratuitous flags festooned from grand buildings.

White Juju grew out of a number profoundly affecting conversations with the musicians, dancers, local historians and kindred artists and academics such as Jason Moran, Kehinde Andrews, Nicholas Payton and Lowkey whilst developing #BlackPeril2020.

There was a powerful suspicion that the current receptivity to the black experience sparked by George Floyd’s murder may only be momentary. Once hashtags had run their course and profile pictures were no longer black squares, the stultifying status quo would return. It felt increasingly important to use this window, to capture the moment and record our unfiltered experiences.

COMPOSING WHITE JUJU

Composing this music was profoundly cathartic, discovering how entrenched our national myths are on both sides of the Atlantic and a how a form of ‘white juju’ was constantly employed to distract, distort the truth and disorientate the masses. 2020 was a year in which it became impossible to deny the supranational and systemic nature of racism. I wanted to capture how it felt at the time, before the distorting lenses of memory and shame could be applied.

The piece is centred around ten new works created for a jazz quintet and chamber orchestra. Beginning with the deafening silence of quarantine in 2020, it explores how the diverse sounds of the past years are tangentially connected by a shared history. From a bird call in Central Park, to a statue of a slaver crashing into Bristol’s River Avon. The music that you will hear oscillates between unity and division. Recognisable sounds unite people, traversing geographical and cultural divides. Much like Covid-19, they momentarily dissolve national boundaries. Conversely there is a sonic world which deliberately evokes division, distraction and terror, using widely understood ‘classical’ code to evoke establishment order and intimidation.

The piece is deliberately danceable, whilst intentionally subverting the perceived elitism of orchestral music. It asks how cultural hierarchies originate and why audiences often feel constrained by stuffy and exclusionary norms. It creatively explores the tension between classical music, when it is perceived as an impenetrable elitist art-form, and the seismic popular impacts of jazz and hip hop. Are these distinctions based on truth or mere perception?

For the past two years music has been my indispensable way of making sense of the apparently senseless. I am joined by incredible musicians in Rick, Nick and Greg who understand the range of idioms and cultural phenomena I am referencing, but also bring their personal perspectives to

bear on the past two years. And I am thrilled to have worked with Lee Reynolds on developing nuanced and sensitive orchestral arrangements.

The creative process has become both therapy and a rubric for navigating a bewildering culture war. This project is inspired by the need to reframe the debate, liberating artists and audiences from this confusing world. Whilst *The Black Peril* explored the history of race riots, *White Juju* brings the topic right up to the present to explore its legacy and contemporary footprint. I’m truly privileged and excited to be able to share it all with you.’

THE NAME: WHITE JUJU

‘*Juju*’ is so indelibly linked to black culture. In attaching it to and juxtaposing it with ‘white’, the idea is that the phrase describes a phenomenon that no other words would be quite fitting to describe.

I had an epiphany one time when talking to Terence Blanchard, the great American trumpeter. He described how, even though he didn’t go out marching, once confederate statues were removed from the streets of New Orleans (streets that he had walked down daily since school age), he felt lighter, like a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. He was aware suddenly that he had laboured under an invisible force for most of his life.’

Soweto Kinch

composer, saxophone & vocals



Award winning alto-saxophonist and MC Soweto Kinch is one of the most exciting and versatile musicians in both the British jazz and hip hop scenes. Undoubtedly one of the few artists in either genre with a degree in Modern History from Oxford University, he has amassed an impressive list of accolades and awards on both sides of the Atlantic, including two MOBO Awards for Best Jazz Act (2003, 2007) and a Mercury Prize Nomination for Album of the Year (2003). More recently, Kinch extended his work in music media, becoming the main presenter for BBC Radio 3's Jazz Now, and fronting BBC Four documentary Jazzology (2018). He was further awarded an Honorary Associateship at Hertford College, Oxford (2018) and by the Royal Academy of Music (2020).

With an impressive discography that has covered a wide range of themes from the Seven Deadly Sins to slavery/emancipation, Kinch's music has seen him tour extensively with his own ensembles as well as forging lasting collaborations from the US, India

to Australia and Sudan to Brazil. In 2013, Kinch presented a stage performance of his concept album *The Legend of the Mike Smith* at Birmingham Repertory Theatre. *Nonagram*, his 2016 release, explored sacred geometry and the healing properties of sound in an age of increasing division.

Kinch returned with a brand new studio album and live tour in 2019. *The Black Peril* debuted at a sold-out Earth, Hackney during the EFG London Jazz Festival 2019. A politically and racially-engaged body of work, historical inspiration for the record can be traced to the episodes of civil unrest that erupted across the western world throughout 1919. Despite the restrictions of quarantine, Kinch continued this work by staging an online festival #BlackPeril2020. It combined bespoke artistic collaborations with exciting black British musicians, choreographers and dancers such as Jade Hackett, Nathaniel Cross, Hannah Mbuya and Tyrone Isaac-Stuart as well as lively discussions with established artists such as Lowkey, Jason Moran, Nicholas Payton.

Lee Reynolds

conductor & orchestrator



Lee Reynolds is a Sky Arts Award-winning conductor with a reputation for bringing intensity and exceptional detail to his performances, with a combination of rigour and flair. He is the Associate Conductor of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain.

Alongside the production of Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* with VOPERA and the London Philharmonic Orchestra (Best Opera, Sky Arts Awards 2021), current and recent highlights include his house debut conducting John Fulljames' production of Kurt Weill's *Street Scene* at the Opéra de Monte Carlo, performances with the London Symphony Orchestra, his Russian debut with the New Russian State Symphony Orchestra in Moscow, performances with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, and a recording of British horn concertos with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Ben Goldscheider.

Other highlights include conducting Britten and Wagner in the new Linbury Theatre at the Royal Opera House; four world premieres at Glyndebourne; performances with the Southbank Sinfonia, Dublin Concert Orchestra, Orchestra of Opera North, Beethoven Academy Orchestra in Krakow and BBC Philharmonic Orchestra; and conducting a new production of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* with Nederlandse Reisopera.

As part of an extensive catalogue of recordings, his 2015 recording of Chopin's Piano Concerto No 2 with Adolfo Barabino and the LSO has been lauded in the international press, and the world premiere recording of Vito Palumbo's Violin Concerto with the LSO and Francesco d'Orazio will be released on the BIS label in 2022. Other highlights include Barber's Violin Concerto with Min Lee and the Philharmonia Orchestra; a world premiere recording of Stuart Turnbull's symphonic poem *Odyssey* with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra; an audiovisual recording of a programme of works by Percy Aldridge Grainger with the LSO (available on Marquee TV); and a recording of Britten, MacMillan and Stravinsky with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra.

London Symphony Orchestra

On Stage

Guest Leader

Stephanie Gonley

First Violins

Ginette Decuyper
Maxine Kwok
William Melvin
Elizabeth Pigram
Laurent Quénelle
Harriet Rayfield
Gordon Mackay
Takane Funatsu

Second Violins

Julián Gil Rodríguez
Miya Väisänen
David Ballesteros
Matthew Gardner
Naoko Keatley
Alix Lagasse
Belinda McFarlane
Iwona Muszynska
Csilla Pogany
Andrew Pollock
Paul Robson

Violas

Gillianne Haddow
Malcolm Johnston
Anna Bastow
Stephen Doman
Robert Turner
Ilona Bondar

Cellos

Alastair Blayden
Jennifer Brown
Eve-Marie Caravassilis
Daniel Gardner
Laure Le Dantec
Amanda Truelove

Double Basses

Colin Paris
Patrick Laurence
Matthew Gibson
Thomas Goodman

Flutes

Gareth Davies
Sharon Williams

Oboes

Olivier Stankiewicz
Rosie Jenkins

Clarinets

Anthony Pike
Chi-Yu Mo

Bassoon

Rachel Gough

Horns

Timothy Jones
Angela Barnes
Jake Parker

Trumpets

Philippe Schartz
Richard Blake
Paul Mayes

Trombones

Jon Stokes
Sion Jones

Bass Trombone

Paul Milner

Tuba

Ben Thomson

Timpani

Nigel Thomas

Percussion

Neil Percy
David Jackson

Harp

Bryn Lewis
Sally Pryce

WHAT'S ON AT THE LSO: WE RECOMMEND

HALF SIX FIX CONCERTS

An early-evening burst of music, with on-stage introductions from the conductor and players about what makes the music so great.
Wednesday 8 & 15 December 2021, 23 February & 27 April 2022

[iso.co.uk/halfsixfix](https://www.iso.co.uk/halfsixfix)

AYANNA WITTER-JOHNSON & LSO PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Composer-singer-cellist Witter-Johnson joins the LSO Percussion Ensemble for a vibrant, jazz-infused evening, featuring her new piece.
Saturday 20 November 2021, LSO St Luke's

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Satire and sleaze in Weimar Berlin: explore dark secrets and memorable melodies in Kurt Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins*.
Thursday 28 April 2022
Half Six Fix Wednesday 27 April

A CELEBRATION OF GOSPEL MUSIC

André J Thomas curates and conducts an evening dedicated to American gospel music, with the **London Symphony Chorus**.
Sunday 29 May 2022

[iso.co.uk/whatson](https://www.iso.co.uk/whatson)

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