

Caribbean Wo

IN THE PUBLIC EYE

The Journey of a Caribbean Woman

By Joanne Kilgour Dowdy
Reviewed by Michelle Young
Commiss University Press

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JOANNE KILGOUR DOWDY

Writing helps us in remembering and re-imagining our common humanity. It also connects readers to their past and future present. Some books inspire us through wonderful photography, and others are demonstrative in their telling by mediating our understanding and appreciation of the worlds that we help to re-fashion. As such, all great books resonate through time and Joanne Kilgour Dowdy's *In the Public Eye* is no exception.

Kilgour Dowdy emerged as one of our finest performers after her stage debut at age ten in Trinidad and Tobago. In *Eye* she presents a visual and virtual treat that's crammed full of riveting images. Drawing on forty-plus years of experience and vignettes of theatrical performances in her native Trinidad and Tobago and the U. S. A., she narrates the beginnings of post-independence theatre. This photo autobiography is essential reading for patrons of the arts, and a must-have for every Trinbagonian's coffee table (or "center table" as we call it) for it chronicles and celebrates a key period in the nation's maturation and blossoming of an indigenous entertainment industry.

In the Public Eye is a fund of knowledge and a salute to the author's lifetime devotion to her passion--the stage. "Alice through the Looking Glass" was Dowdy's stage debut, performed at Queens Hall, a venue known for its many memorable performances. The Sepia image of the author and her fellow dancers, dressed in tutus and toe shoes, is reminiscent of the times when all little girls wanted to be ballerinas. Kilgour Dowdy's own, very fine, words capture her fascination with the transformative power of dance: "Dance is a magical world to me. I become movement. When I dressed up in this costume as a violet, I became a flower and felt that the whole world was a garden in which I was one of the blooms." Her smiling face still shines with such happiness in that picture as it captures her obvious joy at being the intangible that helps us remember and wonder.

Kilgour Dowdy also used her photographic compilation to pay tribute to the fellow thespians and dancers who worked with her in the theatrical trenches. Much of this memory/tribute is captured in black and white such as the picture depicting her performance in the dance piece, "Woman to Woman" by Molly Molloy. The figures of Kilgour Dowdy and fellow dancers Melanie Gilbert and Mervyn Francis are preserved in sensuous yet isolated positions, the grainy yesteryear image adding to the pictures' sensuality and sad-

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ness.

The author reminds us of her performance in the "The Rig" which was the Anglophone Caribbean's first made-for TV movie, written and directed by Nobel Prize Winner Derek Walcott. Through this story of international intrigue and local fantasy the movie explored the impact of the oil discoveries off the East Coast of Trinidad on the village life of the area and the society of Trinidad & Tobago in general. Photographer Bruce Paddington's photo of the colorful costumes Kilgour Dowdy and the other dancers wore truly captures the country's beauty in motion. On the flip side, "The Three Sisters" by Chekov, in addition to being contextually different, was a play that was 'foreign' to Kilgour Dowdy, yet her lead-role performance--after four years at The Julliard Theater School in New York--prompted her to view it as "The Grand Prize." The actor's confidence while performing in both roles-- in the African dancers' long dresses and the stately dress of a 1900 Russian woman-- is evident, in both photos, of an ability to inhabit and transform herself into her characters.

In *The Public Eye* celebrates Joanne Kilgour Dowdy, the Arts, and the fashioning of a Trinbagonian aesthetic. In the book she memorializes key events of her life by noting each dance, each task, each word, her laughter and her tears. By sharing this celebration of life through more than forty photos she captures the essence of her life's journey on which many of us were fellow pilgrims. *Eye* is an inspiring collage and a wonderful piece of literature that imparts the philosophy that one must never be in too big of a hurry to stop, to smell, to feel, to touch, and to see the importance of living a full and productive life.

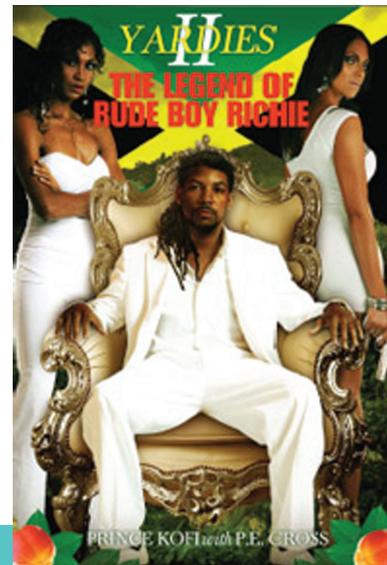
It's only fitting that as we celebrate Women's History Month we applaud Dr. Dowdy Kilgour for her stellar contributions to the post-independence theatre movement in Trinidad and Tobago and her insights as a teacher and a prolific author. In *The Public Eye* empowers young women of Trinidad and Tobago and throughout the diaspora to envision and realize seemingly improbable dreams.

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YARDIES II

The Legend of Rude Boy Richie

Prince Kofi with P.E. Cross
GhettoLife Publishing Company
Reviewed by Grace Mackenzie
www.ghettolifepublishing.com
P.O. Box 1186, New York, NY 10163
US\$19.95.



Prince Kofi with P.E. Cross wrote the novel, *Yardies: The Making of A Jamaican Posse*, published in 2010. And now in 2012, the sequel, *Yardies II: The Legend of Rude Boy Riche*, is also written by Prince Kofi with P.E. Cross. There is a debate amongst readers of *Yardies I* about if Prince Kofi is P.E. Cross and if P.E. Cross is a woman. A woman by the name of Cross is always passionately promoting both novels and many suspect that the novels were penned by her. If they are correct then this woman is a brilliant, shrewd and knowledgeable.

Yardies II: The Legend of Rude Boy Richie is even more exciting and nail biting than *Yardies I*. While Rude Boy Riche is serving time in a U.S. prison for scores of murders and other crimes, his body is returned to Jamaica and he is given a hero's funeral by gangsters and communities that depend on the generosity of gangsters to survive in their state of poverty.

Yardies II Continued on page 14