

‘The Next Best Thing to Being There’: Covering the 1966 Dakar Festival and its Legacy in Black Popular Magazines

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One of the ironies of cultural pan-Africanism is that while its broadly leftist discourse of liberation might suggest that non-elite workers would figure prominently in its projects, very few of the participants in its conferences, congresses and festivals came from beyond the ranks of intellectuals, politicians or prominent artists. Indeed, the First World Festival of Negro Arts (FESMAN) of 1966, and the subsequent pan-African festivals of 1969 (Algiers) and 1977 (Lagos), all privileged artists and cultural workers with the means and governmental support to travel. This chapter explores how popular African and African American glossy print magazines allowed less elite participants to follow the festivals from their own homes. The chapter examines selected issues of *Bingo* (based in Paris and Dakar and distributed throughout the Francophone world), the three Johnson Company magazines based in the USA, *Ebony*, *Jet* and *Negro Digest*, and the Nigerian edition of *Drum* magazine, which covered FESTAC in Lagos in 1977. It focuses specifically on these popular magazines rather than the coverage and responses in more literary publications like *Transition* and *Présence Africaine* in an effort to consider audiences beyond the ‘usual suspects’ of educated and politically engaged readers.

This discussion of popular magazine coverage seeks to uncover how the digest form of illustrated magazines exposes the way the festival tapped into not only pan-African feeling but also a particular idea of culture as an industry, and by extension cultural events as consumable commodities. These magazines featured stories that wrote back to and against official state agendas, and revealed the rich and sometimes fractious parallel conversations to those in the sanctioned halls of the symposia and colloquia that accompanied each festival. They remind us that the cultural festival is a form that is necessarily messy, noisy, crowded and contentious. Indeed, such live events would seem to offer a forum for the very opposite of unity. However,

as the magazine coverage surveyed below shows, such struggles over meaning and accidental encounters were no mere example of 'message creep' but rather opened up to non-elite parties and sceptical commentators those fissures in the stated agendas of official organizers where the real work of solidarity began. Such disjunctures and contradictions showed that, as Lamine Diakhaté would observe at the Algiers festival, unity depended on a recognition of, and respect for, difference. The chapter is structured in two parts, the first on Dakar 1966 and the second on its legacy. Each publication (and often each article within a single publication) highlights a divergent dimension of the events, and reveals how the national contexts of participants also structured the meanings they made from the events. One theme emerges repeatedly—on the margins of official events and in unexpected moments, artists and reporters observed that one of the most valuable elements in the festivals was the opportunity to encounter and exchange with other Africans and diasporans, improvising a common language that did not efface differences so much as translate them into resources for new forms of creativity.

Dakar 1966: The First World Festival of Negro Arts (FESMAN)

Given its editorial connections to Dakar, it is no surprise that *Bingo* covered the 1966 festival in the most detail, with the April issue featuring it as the cover story. The cover's large print title, 'Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres', is superimposed against a green background. The cover image is a three-quarter-length portrait of a bespectacled President Senghor, gazing directly at the camera, wearing a double-breasted, blue suit and resting his hand on three thick, hardback books (Figure 14). The white handkerchief in his top pocket and white cuffs peeking out from his sleeves emphasize the formality of the portrait, a far cry from the interest in traditional African and typically Muslim fashions evinced by American visitors (the more daring adopters being named and finding their bright-coloured new *boubous* highlighted in the US black press). Even at the seemingly mundane level of the sartorial, a set of competing agendas and ideas about *how* to embody or illustrate Negritude would be at the core of the event. The editorial by Paulin Joachim is unusually effusive, and its almost breathless enthusiasm predicted glory for the organizers and a renewal in creativity for the guests in what was termed Africa's 'rendezvous with itself':

Ce mois d'avril qui éclate dans la joie solaire comme une grenade sur la route de notre destin et nous éclabousse de gloire et de fierté, ce moment que n'attendaient plus nos yeux fatigués de scruter les horizons, nos lèvres lasses de supplier les dieux, toutes les communautés noires éparses dans le monde, le vieux baobab et toutes ses ramifications ultramarines se doivent de le marquer d'une pierre blanche [...] [Le festival] n'est, au fond, que le rendez-vous de l'Afrique avec elle-même dans l'arc-en-ciel fraternel de ses

mille visages et dans la prolifération de son génie [...] Et en regardant vivre, sous le grand soleil, toute nue, une civilisation qui rappelle encore les premiers matins du monde, en baignant dans la vitalité simple et droite de ces peuples africains en marche vers leur destin [...] le vieux monde peut aussi prendre comme un bain de jouvence, puiser des forces nouvelles pour la poursuite de sa route. (Joachim 1966a: 5)

[This month of April, which bursts forth in the joyful sun like a grenade in the path of our destiny and showers us with glory and pride, this moment that our eyes no longer expected to see, tired from scouring the horizon, our lips weary from pleading with the gods, all the scattered black communities around the world, the venerable baobab and all its overseas buds must mark this as a red-letter day [...] Fundamentally, [the festival] is no less than Africa's rendezvous with itself within the fraternal rainbow of its thousand faces and in the proliferation of its genius [...] And, by observing, under the baking sun, in its natural naked state, this civilization that still recalls the dawn of time, by bathing in the simple and upright vitality of these African peoples marching towards their destiny [...] the old world can also use this as a rejuvenating experience and take new strength from it in pursuing its own path.]

Three short articles attempted to give voice to multiple perspectives. Brief interviews with a set of African, European and American intellectuals and readers elicited similar answers to questions about the meaning of African art. An article on Nigeria, the birthplace of black art, included several photographs of rare pieces that would be on display at the festival, including, remarkably, the ivory mask from Benin which later became the symbol for the 1977 FESTAC in Lagos. A third article revisited the history of Fodéba Keita's dance troupe. Not only was Keita involved in planning the festival, the legacy of his dance company was in full evidence in the prominent place and significant stage time devoted to dance troupes from across the continent and diaspora.

The main coverage of the festival in *Bingo* did not appear until June 1966, by which point a more analytical assessment was cohering. The editorial took up the quarrels with Negritude that numerous writers had voiced, particularly in the years since the Makerere Writers' Conference of 1962. Joachim, loyal as ever to Senghor, slyly noted that many of the recent detractors of Negritude among a younger generation of writers and artists had been happy to retract or temper their criticisms, particularly those who won awards for their work at the festival, including Soyinka, Sembene and Tchicaya U'Tamsi. In Joachim's view, the festival was its own vindication:

c'est avec une fierté légitime, la satisfaction naturelle, spontanée, du devoir accompli, que le grand poète sénégalais devait conclure: 'Par l'audience que le Premier Festival mondial des Arts nègres a rencontrée en Afrique et en Amérique, en Europe et en Asie, les militants de la Négritude ont atteint leurs objectifs, dont ils ne voyaient certes pas la réalisation avant la fin du siècle.' (Joachim 1966b: 11)

[it is with legitimate pride, a natural and spontaneous satisfaction at completing a task, that the great Senegalese poet concluded: 'Through the audience that the First World Festival of Negro Arts encountered in Africa and America, in Europe and in Asia, the militants of Negritude reached their objectives, which they had not hoped to achieve before the end of the century.']

Negritude's accomplishment, as he saw it, was to quash the sense of ambiguity and ambivalence that colonial legacies had left lingering:

[La Négritude] nous aura rendus à nous-mêmes dans notre vérité essentielle, et c'est grâce à elle, c'est outillé, armé par elle que nous aurons commencé à cultiver nos valeurs propres qui sont, soulignons-le très fort, des valeurs essentiellement de complémentarité, de dialogue, d'échange, mais non d'opposition systématique, de raidissement ou de je ne sais quel orgueil racial qui sonnerait à nos oreilles comme une démission de l'esprit. (Joachim 1966b: 11)

[Negritude] will have revealed us to ourselves in our essential truth, and it is thanks to it, equipped and armed by it, that we will have begun to cultivate our own values which are, let us emphasize this, essentially values of complementarity, dialogue, exchange, and not of opposition, rigidity or who knows what other racial pride which would signal in our minds a resignation of the spirit.

Returning to the round-robin short interview format, 'Où va la culture négro-africaine' [Where is Black African Culture Going] asked Aimé Césaire, Amadou Samb, Vincent Monteil, Lilyan Kesteloot, R.P. M'veng and Alex Adandé to reflect on the futures whose present the festival performed. More specifically, they were invited to answer three questions regarding the festival's legacy, its most essential contribution to the arts and values of Negritude, and whether and why there ought to be another festival. There was broad consensus on the value of repeating the festival, ideally regularly, but some of the more interesting responses to other questions included Césaire's call for a practice of critique (rather than mere celebration) to be added to the festival, in part to make the process of selecting participants more rigorous: 'Par exemple [...] trop souvent le bon a été noyé dans le médiocre' [For example [...] too often the good was drowned out by the mediocre] (cited in Joachim 1966c: 14). Several commentators commented on the demonstration of unity (even in the midst of such great cultural diversity). Monteil viewed the festival as delivering a decisive shock, a discovery for Europeans of a network of rich and complex cultures. On the other hand, M'veng insisted that it was too soon after the end of the festival to evaluate its significance, a sentiment that may also have motivated the magazines to temper their coverage of the festival post facto—certainly, *Bingo's* coverage after this June issue was limited to brief references in articles focused on other topics. In some ways, this reflected a lingering sense that those who were in the best position to define and analyse culture were in fact the educated elites—*hommes de culture*—and, to a lesser extent,

artists, rather than viewing the festival as an occasion where the working classes had a voice and role to play in shaping culture. One trace of the sharp critiques Negritude had suffered as being racist (even in its anti-racism) was the emphasis among many commentators at the festival on how it demonstrated what black cultures, and particularly black African cultures, had to contribute to the world at large, often a place-holder for Europe.

As may be clear from the above, much of the coverage of the festival reflected a default emphasis on male artists and intellectuals—figures like Lilyan Kesteloot and Katherine Dunham were notable precisely because they were exceptional. However, one of the few articles focusing on the participation of women in the festival was a feature on dancers and singers: 'Elles ont dansé et chanté au Festival de Dakar' [They danced and sang at the Dakar Festival]. Brief interviews with individual artists from a set of nine performance troupes gave voice to the perspectives of performers (some of the few of any gender presented in the coverage, regardless of publication and location):

La consécration d'un long effort pour sortir de la masse des danseuses folkloriques anonymes. 'Bingo' a rencontré Georgette Bellow, du Togo, Nina Baden Semper, de Trinidad, Micheline Soloum [elsewhere spelled 'Sofoum'], du Gabon, Victoria Akinyemi, du Nigéria, Ginette Menard, d'Haïti, Pussy El Massey, de la RAU, Jenny Alpha, de Paris, Nilce Correa, du Brésil, et Cucumbra Diarra, du Mali, et s'est entretenu avec elles. ('Elles ont dansé' 1966: 17)

[The consecration of a long effort to emerge from the mass of anonymous folkloric dancers. 'Bingo' met Georgette Bellow, from Togo, Nina Baden Semper, from Trinidad, Micheline Soloum [elsewhere spelled 'Sofoum'], from Gabon, Victoria Akinyemi, from Nigeria, Ginette Menard, from Haiti, Pussy El Massey, from the United Arab Republic,¹ Jenny Alpha, from Paris, Nilce Correa, from Brazil, and Cucumbra Diarra, from Mali, and spoke with them.]

Their perspectives diverged from each other more markedly than the intellectuals interviewed in the same issue, and while the interviewer's consistent interest in their marital and familial status detracted from the intention to highlight their artistry, the interviews managed to elicit substantive comments on the significance of performance and how the festival had shaped the women's impressions of contemporary arts in Africa. The members of the Malian and Gabonese folkloric dance troupes, among the younger performers interviewed, saw dance primarily as an expression of rhythm and instinct, and a cultural practice rather than a career path. The artists from Haiti, Brazil, Togo and Trinidad, on the other hand, emphasized values closer to the Senghorian agenda of assembling and revealing black cultures to each other—dancer Ginette Menard going so far as to describe the visit as not only a chance to discover a new world but 'surtout un retour aux sources' [principally

1 The United Arab Republic was a state created in 1958 by the union of Egypt and Syria, and, for a short time, the Yemen.

a return to the source] ('Elles ont dansé' 1966: 17). For Victoria Akiyemi, an instructor in initiation, 'cette coutume étant élevée au stade d'institution au Nigéria' [this custom having been elevated to an institution in Nigeria], her cultural expertise was reflected in her impression of the festival 'comme le rendez-vous des traditions de l'Afrique [...] l'art nègre doit donc être avant tout un art traditionnel, la danse restant son expression la plus fidèle' [as the meeting place for Africa's traditions [...] negro art must thus above all else be a traditional art, and dance its most faithful expression] (17).

Among the popular US black magazines covering the 1966 festival, the most comprehensive coverage as well as the most robust engagements with the controversies it generated within the African American community was *Negro Digest*. Both *Ebony* and *Jet* also covered the festival in more 'neutral' journalistic tones, and so a quick review of their features will add context to the *Negro Digest's* portrayals.

Ebony was the most pictorially oriented of the three Johnson magazines, and its July 1966 issue featured a 13-page article, entitled simply 'World Festival of Negro Arts', which included three pages of full-colour images as well as others in black and white. The aim of the article seemed to be to make the festival as sensorially accessible to readers as possible through sumptuous visual representations and detailed descriptions of accommodations and performances alike. The tone in the latter half of the article became more opinionated, and the voice of Hoyt Fuller, which would become more individuated in other publications and with time, emerges vividly in somewhat strident accounts like these:

The Festival itself proved sometimes banal, frequently engrossing, and occasionally brilliant. Banality was provided by the Brazilians who had been eagerly awaited but who disappointed the expectant international gathering with a sleek, supper club-style revue called 'Nights in Brazil' [...] Appearing in the Catholic cathedral before a capacity audience of a few hundred people [Marion Williams], the big, exuberant singer and her group of six singers, dancers and musicians quickly overcame the very severe handicaps of poor acoustics and awkward staging. Prowling the platform like some great maternal tiger, Miss Williams unleashed her booming voice, at first startling the predominantly-European audience, then captivating it, and finally seducing all into a hand-clapping, foot-stomping accompaniment that rocked the gothic rafters. (Fuller 1966d: 100)

Descriptions of spontaneous dance and music in the streets and clubs were also included in vivid detail: the colours of outfits were 'gay—and sometimes outrageous'; the nightclubs were located 'in the teeming core of the city and along the sea-cooled *corniche*' (100). Even if readers could not experience the events themselves, Fuller's descriptions sought to make his account visceral.

In 1966, Fuller's appraisal of Negritude was relatively sympathetic, although he found the description by USA-based academic St Clair Drake clearer than that of Senghor:

First, a passion for similar types of music, dance and graphic and plastic art forms which exist in what I call the Pan-African aggregate. Second, a softer and resilient rather than a hard and mechanical approach to life. Third, a deep resentment, whether expressed or unexpressed, over subordination to white people during the 400 years of the slave trade and subsequent structuring of caste relations here (in the U.S.) and in Africa. (Fuller 1966d: 100)

The report mentioned an issue addressed more comprehensively in the editorial and in Johnson's other magazines—the profound disturbance caused to many African American artists by the selection of a wealthy white socialite, Mrs Virginia Inness-Brown, to head the American committee for the festival—and also noted that many Senegalese artists were well informed enough about black cultural production in the USA to have hoped to see some of

the most exciting of America's black intellectuals—people like John O. Killens, LeRoi Jones [later Amiri Baraka], Ossie Davis and James Baldwin [...] 'You sent us Langston Hughes, and we love him', a bi-lingual Senegalese actor complained, 'but where are your younger writers?' (Fuller 1966d: 102)

Similarly, the absence of performers like Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk and Harry Belafonte, disappointed many.

Jet Magazine's style tended more towards gossip column reportage, and coverage featured a 'seen-and-heard about town' style rundown of various celebrities. Its 21 and 28 April issues offered the most contemporaneous coverage of the festival. In the 21 April issue, in the 'Paris Scratchpad' section (an ironic echo of France's prominent role in the planning and funding of the festival), Charles L. Sanders reported: 'Just below Senegal President and Mme. Leopold Senghor on the Dakar social ladder these days are U.S. Ambassador and Mrs. Mercer Cook' (Sanders 1966a: 48; emphasis in original). Elsewhere in the issue, a three-page article included seven photographs, one of them showing the kind of impromptu jam session between artists from across the globe that would distinguish the festival tradition in its iterations elsewhere. The caption, 'When Duke's music got good to him, Senegalese drummer Gana M'bow joined band' (48), introduced American readers to one of the heroes of Senegalese percussion. In the 28 April issue, similar attention was paid to personalities, and Sanders informed readers that the festival was drawing the likes of the singer and academic 'Dr. Zelma George (who had to be helped down the plane ramp because of all the packages she was carrying)' and 'fine-shaped Dorothy Cotton, the Atlanta gal who's one of the hardest workers with the SCLC [Southern Christian Leadership Conference]' (Sanders 1966b: 26).

The *Negro Digest* offered a more complex account, and its coverage continued from April to September. The April issue, published before the festival began, was directed largely at visitors to Senegal. Photographs primarily showed the Plateau district's modernist structures, including those constructed for the festival, like the Daniel Sorano Theatre and the art museum (that would later

be transformed into the country's Supreme Court), although there were also two images of women in conversation and a tourist-ready shot of the streets of Gorée. The text drew heavily from the official Senegalese press releases about the festival's aims and the significance of its taking place on African soil. Its description of the city, people and festival facilities introduced a more critical eye, noting the economic and racial segregation of the Plateau including the cramped and insalubrious *medina*, describing each of the ethnic groups represented in Dakar, and warning the magazine's readers of French neo-colonial racism: 'The French in Dakar will be hostile at worst and will feign monumental indifference at best. They should be ignored. However, Festival visitors would insist on courtesy and service, as they certainly will be paying for it' (Fuller 1966a: 81). Interestingly, the feature ends mid-page, and is followed by an extract from *The Wretched of the Earth*. Given Fanon's importance to Black Power thought, and the contrast between his advocacy of armed struggle in Algeria and elsewhere and Senghor's more accommodating stance, the juxtaposition might well be read as an implicit critique of Negritude:

In order to assimilate and to experience the oppressor's culture, the native has had to leave certain of his intellectual possessions in pawn. These pledges include his adoption of the forms of thought of the colonialist bourgeoisie ... Now the *fellah*, the unemployed man, the starving native do not lay a claim to the truth; they do not *say* that they represent the truth, for they *are* the truth. (Fanon, quoted in Fuller 1966a: 82)

Presumably the editors felt the quote spoke for itself, since no gloss or context was proffered.

While the following month's issue only included brief mentions of particular attendees in the 'Random Notes' social section, a long article by John O. Killens, entitled 'Brotherhood of Blackness', was of obvious relevance to the festival's aims. The article was a response (and a rebuke) to an exchange that had run from January to September of 1965 between a Nigerian student, Thomas O. Echewa, and the African American writer, John A. Williams. Killens opened his article as follows: 'Let us speak with each other for a time about the Brotherhood of Blackness, which might almost just as well be called the Fellowship of the Wretched and the Disinherited. Fanon called us The Damned of the Earth' (Killens 1966: 4). Insisting that such unity was not grounded in biology so much as in a shared struggle against white supremacist racism, Killens urged an engaged pan-Africanism which seems consonant with, although more politically pointed than, Negritude. Not only was a shared history of oppression the grounds for alliance between Africans and African Americans, but so, too, their

community of objectives is a mutual determination to throw off the black man's burden all over this white-oriented earth. Let us face a few cruel, indisputable facts [...] Africa is not free and independent yet, and Neither is the American Negro [...] Let us, rather emphasize the fundamental things

which keep the Brotherhood together, and forge a unity from Johannesburg, South Africa, to Jackson, Mississippi, to throw off the black man's burden. It is left up to us to make this the Freedom Century. It is up to us to forge a unity of our minds and muscles, dedicated to the proposition that we shall lay this burden down. And free all mankind everywhere. (Killens 1966: 10)

The search for such solidarity remained a key objective and indeed stumbling block for all three of the festivals discussed here.

The most substantive coverage of the festival was in the June 1966 issue. The cover features a collage of authors' faces from the writers' conference held at Fisk University in May 1966. This cover article, along with a report on the Black Arts Convention known as Forum 1966 held in Detroit that month, gives a sense of the vibrant cultural foment of the era, and the context in which Dakar's events were to be interpreted. Photographs from the festival were dotted throughout the volume. The main article, 'Festival Postscripts', began with an alleged account of the selection by the American Committee of the jazz ensemble to represent the USA, and the claim that only after two white band leaders were mentioned did Ellington's name get selected. This 'story—whether apocryphal or true—tells much about the orientation of the American Committee': 'In the first place, only a few thousand American Negroes knew anything about either the American Committee of the Festival of Negro Arts itself. For an event of such importance in the Negro world, this neglect was all but criminal' (Fuller 1966c: 82). The lack of publicity was blamed in large part on the fact '*that a white person [was] the head of a committee for a festival of Negro arts*', for Mrs Inness-Brown had not thought to inform the black newspapers of the event. Objections were also raised regarding the selection of artists:

Arminta Adams, a 'classical' pianist, and Martina Arroyo, a soprano who recently appeared at the Metropolitan Opera [while fine artists in their own right] were all but wasted at Dakar. There is nothing particularly 'Negro' about a pianist playing Bach preludes and a soprano singing Verdi arias. [*And similar problems applied to the multiracial Leonard De Paur chorus.*] (Fuller 1966c: 83)

However, the critique of the racial and aesthetic values in operation was not limited to the American committee's decisions. One of the most popular performers was the gospel vocalist, Marion Williams, and yet, when

told that it was a pity that the masses of Africans would not have the benefit of Miss Williams' art, one director of the Festival (a Frenchman) replied: 'But what does it matter? Everyone of any importance is here at the cathedral.' *Everyone of importance?* When the audience consisted of only a few hundred people, most of whom were white! (Fuller 1966c: 85)

The report also made clear that some of the most successful moments of the festival had arisen through chance. While the documentary of FESMAN by William Greaves features the Alvin Ailey Dancers prominently, Fuller's

report reveals that they appeared only as a substitute for the Arthur Mitchell group, but nonetheless 'salvaged the sagging prestige of the American representation [...] Mr. Ailey brought some fresh ethnic feeling to the Festival' (Fuller 1966c: 85). Additionally, questions were raised about the role of the State Department (which had provided much-needed additional funding) in selecting (and barring) participants in the festival. Hoyt Fuller asked:

Would the State Department approve the appearance of jazz musicians or blues singers who have been convicted as narcotics addicts, for example? Or would writers who have consistently opposed the Government's position in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Vietnam receive State Department approval? (Fuller 1966c: 85)

In addition to the 'Festival Postscript' an editorial reiterated concerns at the failure to appoint a black person to lead the planning committee, and dismissed one of the rationales that had been offered for selecting Mrs Inness-Brown, that of fundraising needs. The editorial closed by calling for the inclusion of regular working people in the festival planning, a call that resonated at multiple points on both sides of the Atlantic as the optics of an elite event became more and more apparent: 'What's wrong with going directly to the black masses, explaining to them what the project is and what the problems are, inviting them to identify with the program and to help make it a success? What's wrong with that?' (Fuller 1966b: 97). This editorial struck a chord with readers, for in the September issue two of the letters to the editor commended them for drawing attention to the planning problems. Yvonne Reid wrote, 'I'm very glad you screamed for all to hear what others of us have been either keeping to ourselves or only whispering in select company' (96), and ended her letter by adding that she hoped coverage would continue 'for a long time to come. From the questions I've been getting, I judge the interest is still there' (96). James Emanuel sounded a similar note, writing:

you are to be commended for the candor and the objections for which you were criticized by some. It would have been far better for a Negro to have headed the Committee and to have attracted more Negro participation and pride [...] I hope that you will continue to sound the note of self-respect and self-trust. (Fuller 1966b: 97)

Such letters make it evident that the magazine's coverage made a sense of participation and an investment in the symbolic stakes of the festival accessible to a broad range of readers.

While not the focus of this chapter, it is important to note that the festival was also covered widely in more intellectual and political publications, the most prominent being festival-organizer Alioune Diop's *Présence Africaine* as well as magazines like *The Crisis*, whose coverage was provided by the filmmaker William Greaves, who attended the festival to shoot material that eventually became one of the two most celebrated documentaries of the event, *The First World Festival of Negro Arts*. Sponsored by the US Information

Agency, and used widely as a propaganda film in Africa during the decades when it was inaccessible to the general public in the USA, it offers a live version of many of the photographs featured in the glossy pictorial magazines, and matches the visual digest format that these magazines favoured by concentrating on images in their coverage. Another significant documentary covering the festival, *African Rhythmus*, produced by the Soviet state media, remains even more difficult to access, but in contrast to Greaves' film it is in full colour, bringing a vividness to its representations where the Greaves film's black-and-white footage highlights the historic nature of the event.² *African Rhythmus* also includes footage of private audiences between Senghor and noted Soviet poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, thus offering a more intimate portrait of the festival's primary mover.

Another set of impressions never circulated in the popular press appeared in Duke Ellington's widely disseminated autobiography *Music is My Mistress*. The entry 'Dakar Journal, 1966' captures his delight in hearing not only formal performances but the outdoor rehearsals of traditional troupes: 'I wondered whether it was really a rehearsal, or was it a soul brothers' ceremonial gathering with all of its mystical authenticity. Anyway, I wish I could have seen or recorded it. Too much, baby!' (Ellington 1973: 337). Ellington was one of the few to note that ambassador Mercer Cook (who was both a poet and translator of some of Senghor's works) came from distinguished artistic stock of his own, as the son of Maestro William Marion Cook (a composer and Ellington's one-time mentor). And Ellington fully identified with Negritude's claim to unity: 'After writing African music for thirty-five years, here I am at last in Africa! I can only hope and wish that our performance of "La Plus Belle Africaine", which I have written in anticipation of the occasion, will mean something to the people gathered here' (337).

The encounters with fellow artists at the festival were not limited to other musicians (although the coverage of Gana M'Bow's jam session with Ellington's orchestra in the US press indicates that this was indeed an important dimension). Ellington writes about Papa Tall, one of the leading visual artists in Senegal, from whom he purchased eight works, and was delighted that another, then a work in progress, was shipped to him when Tall had completed it. That such vivid and idiosyncratic artists' perspectives were not more prominently featured in the magazines covering the festival suggests that, like the organizers, the magazines saw the event as primarily a top-down process of synthesis (substituting their editorial voices and a select set of intellectuals for the government and designated spokespersons in the official state publications and programmes) rather than a mosaic of contrasting, and sometimes noisy, voices of artists and *audiences* themselves.

2 As David Murphy notes in the introduction to this volume, there is some evidence that this may have been a typographical error, as the French version of the title, *Rythmes d'Afrique*, would suggest the original title in Russian should have been rendered in English as *African Rhythms*.

The Legacies of Dakar 1966

Since the 1966 festival, there have been several other large-scale events that have both laid claim to its legacy and highlighted their departures from it. The First Pan-African Cultural Festival was held in Algiers, Algeria in 1969. In official documents the 1969 festival *also* laid claim to primacy—the official name of the festival claimed to be the first truly pan-African cultural gathering, perhaps reinforced by the fact that it enjoyed the support of the Organization for African Unity (OAU). The name also implicitly underscored criticisms of the 1966 festival's obscuring of the North African presence in Africa. Popular coverage made less of this contrast and, indeed, *Bingo* magazine's articles, in its two issues featuring the festival, emphasized continuity with the culturally oriented pan-Africanism of the 1966 festival. What they did highlight was the attention the festival would draw to the wave of independence that had swept through Africa in the previous decade.

Officially, only participants from the member states of the OAU, along with the freedom fighters from the Portuguese colonies, were invited. However, the invited artists included Miriam Makeba, a representative of the African National Congress (ANC), still fighting for the liberation of South Africa/Azania, and the African American gospel singer, Mahalia Jackson. The pan-Africanist boundaries envisioned were not strictly limited to those nation states belonging to the OAU. Rather than focusing on the valorization of African contributions to world culture, Algiers sought to position culture as central to economic growth/development. The official Pan-African cultural manifesto published for the festival emphasized the role of the masses in developing systems of thought, philosophies, sciences, beliefs, arts and languages, but also defined culture as essentially dynamic, simultaneously rooted in 'the people' and turned towards the future (Organization of African Unity 1970).

Bingo's pre-festival coverage emphasized a shift from a focus on the arts to a broader attention to education and culture that encompassed the sciences and locally grounded uses of technology. Here one line of continuity between the two festivals was emphasized through a detailed description of the work of the planning committee, which included representatives from Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, Algeria *and* Senegal (with Cameroon, Ethiopia and Tanzania later taking a back seat). Remarkably, the location was only decided upon in 1967, and Algeria's challenge was to prepare for the thousands of participants originally envisaged for a festival in 1968. The rush to prepare led first to postponing the festival to 1969 before, as *Bingo* described it, a subsequent shift in leadership from this international committee to an Algerian director (Joachim 1969a: 17). *Bingo's* detailed descriptions of the preparations reveal just how complex it was to organize a large-scale festival, and why the diplomatic stakes in such planning were so high. As with the Dakar festival, the construction of venues for the performances fascinated the reporters; these physical preparations allowed *Bingo* to highlight this one-time event as an example of post-independence industrial

development and architectural modernism. Coverage emphasized the state-of-the-art nature of the sound system, electronics and the air-conditioning, while the festival budget—apparently funded out of the Algerian government's coffers—further demonstrated the modern state's bureaucratic efficiency.

In Algiers, the venues were more democratic than in Dakar, with ten temporary stages in public squares constructed across the capital. In William Klein's documentary of the festival, the spontaneity and close contact between working-class Algerians and visiting performers in such spaces is remarkable. As with the black American coverage of the 1966 festival, *Bingo* devoted considerable space to describing lodgings and other resources available for attendees. In both instances, few readers were likely actually to travel to the festivals, but including such details displayed the organizational prowess of the host countries and gave readers an intimate imagined access to the everyday dimensions of an otherwise overwhelming event. The article closed by reiterating the festival's claim to Africa's modernity: 'À Alger, en 1969, l'Afrique montrera que sa culture, sans défigurer son propre génie, est capable d'allier le passé au présent pour prendre la place qui lui revient dans le monde moderne' [In Algiers, in 1969, Africa will show, without betraying its own genius, that its culture is capable of allying the past and the present so as to occupy its rightful place in the modern world] (Joachim 1969a: 18). It was not the past that was being reclaimed, but the future.

By November, the tone of *Bingo's* coverage had shifted markedly, as Paulin Joachim's title, 'Absurdes combats de gosier autour de la Négritude à Alger' [Absurd verbal struggles around Negritude in Algiers], indicates. Joachim begins by critiquing the petty quarrels and lack of faith in African unity displayed at the festival, taking particular exception to Stanislav Adotevi's dismissal of Senghor's Negritude. Joachim found Adotevi's critique of Negritude out of date, addressing its origins rather than its evolution as a cultural philosophy: 'Il est fort regrettable que M. Adotevi n'ait pas suivi, d'année en année, de manifestation en manifestation, l'évolution de cette Négritude qu'il pourfend avec une ardeur sauvage' [It is deeply regrettable that Mr Adotevi has not followed, year in year out, from one event to another, the evolution of this Negritude that he assails with a savage ardour] (Joachim 1969b: 12). Joachim cited Césaire's recent characterization of Negritude as a passion, thus aligning the magazine with an elder statesman-poet who enjoyed a similar status to Senghor. The magazine's founding editor, Ousmane Socé Diop, had been a close political ally of Senghor's (and later his ambassador to the USA), and the magazine remained sympathetic to the Senegalese government.

However, Joachim's real lament was that such arguments suggested that Africa was not yet 'mature' enough to aspire to unity. He published an eyewitness account by the writer and politician Lamine Diakhaté as an alternative take. Diakhaté noted that the goal of the festival was to realize African unity on the basis of culture, but from the very beginning the challenge was to 'aussi partir du préalable de la *diversité*, sinon de la *différence*' [also work from the prerequisite of *diversity* and not of *difference*] an occasion to uncover a political

will towards unity. Diakhaté offered a Fanonian diagnosis of the postcolonial inferiority complex and tendency to assume that national development required a *tabula rasa* in order to efface the humiliations of domination and to 'catch up' with more 'advanced' nations. The value he saw in the Algerian festival was its opportunity for diverse African civilizations to converge, meeting and translating each other's heritages and using such differences as resources to counter centuries of European ideologies that minimized African cultural production. In fact, the most urgent task, he writes, was 'd'éviter de transformer en opposition, en antagonisme, les différents aspects de la civilisation de leur continent. Cette différence [...] est source d'enrichissement. L'essentiel est de chercher à être ensemble, parce que différents' [to avoid the transformation of the different aspects of the civilization of their continent into opposition and antagonism. This difference [...] is a source of enrichment. The key is to strive to be together because we are different] (Joachim 1969b: 13). A postmodernist *avant-la-lettre*, Diakhaté cautioned against the dangers of a dichotomous mode of thinking, one he associated with imperialist thought.

The only Johnson magazine that covered the festival was the *Negro Digest*, suggesting that the event's overt anti-colonial stance risked alienating the advertisers that sustained *Ebony* and *Jet*, or that without stars like Ellington and Hughes its interest was more limited than the Dakar festival. The cover of the October 1969 issue, devoted to the festival, featured a portrait of Frantz Fanon, whose work and legacy were analysed in the cover article. In contrast to the traditional reportage style and highly pictorial format of the coverage in 1966 across all three Johnson publications, *Negro Digest's* editor Hoyt Fuller treated readers to a highly personal set of journal entries.

Fuller's account highlighted the festival's support for the US Black Power movement and freedom struggles across the continent noting that Stokely Carmichael and Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver were among the invited guests. He began with a reflection on his first trip to Algeria during the liberation war in 1959, and then tracked his itinerary to the festival, before turning to his interactions with the festival's writers, visual artists, political activists and intellectuals, and spontaneous encounters with Algerians in the streets. The accompanying photographs were highly personal snapshots, quite unlike the press coverage one might expect of an international diplomatic occasion: they capture Stokely Carmichael and Eldridge Cleaver in conversation on a hotel balcony; Miriam Makeba and Stokely in the Mediterranean during a swim with Nathan Hare; the Afro-American Center from across a crowded street. These contrasted with the stark geometries of Dakar's architecture in earlier coverage.

Fuller was less interested in the official events, writing that 'the real talk, the meaningful dialogue is being held—where it is being held at all—in the hotel rooms, over dinner at the Hotel Allité and the St. George, in the two or three posh restaurants around the city' (Fuller 1969: 83). These animated exchanges constituted the moments when solidarity's rugged contours could be hashed out and savoured in direct encounters. In detailing topical conversations, he

allowed readers a window into the contradictions of pan-Africanism. In one entry, for example, he reports on the unease expressed by Nigerian sculptor Ben Enwonwu (himself in his 50s) as he witnessed a generation of figures like Hughes, Robeson and Abrahams recede, while newly independent national governments were persecuting the very artists and activists honoured by events such as the festival. Their conversation about Soyinka's imprisonment emphasized the 'precariousness of political power in Africa' and the critical risks posed by the repression of freedom for the broader project of 'true liberation in Africa' (86). However, conversations still primarily took place in the most luxurious, 'posh' venues: in these international festivals, local non-elites repeatedly found themselves marginalized and unlikely to have access to the most dynamic elements of the events unfolding around them.

Similar divergences in the coverage of the 1977 FESTAC gathering in Lagos emerge from a review of the articles in *Bingo* and *Ebony*. The *Negro Digest* (by then known as *Black World*) had gone out of print only the year before and *Jet* limited its coverage to advertising the May 1977 issue of *Ebony* as 'the next best thing' to having been at FESTAC. *Ebony's* May issue featured an 11-page photo-editorial in which full-colour images took up far more page space than the text that functioned rather as caption than analysis.

While neither the 1966 nor 1969 festival had been covered in any depth by the leading popular magazine in Africa, *Drum* (founded in South Africa and later distributed throughout the continent), it is hardly surprising that its Nigerian edition devoted space in several issues to FESTAC. However, what is striking is that this coverage lagged significantly behind the actual events of the festival, which began in January; it was not until the March issue that it was mentioned, with a cover article that asked, 'Did you see FESTAC?' In their letters to the editor and in interviews, readers lamented the limited coverage. A reader from Port Harcourt, for example, wrote in March 1977 that 'DRUM magazine is one of the most popular journals in Africa. This is more the reason why some of us who could not afford to watch events of FESTAC ask you to put in book form all the events at the FESTAC' ('Did you see FESTAC?' 1977: 3). The same issue ran interviews with 12 Nigerians about their reactions to the festival, and their responses were quite divergent. At their most dire, Nigerians like Sunday James Apeh, a typist, complained: 'I consider FESTAC a waste of money and time. What does the average man gain from it[?]' (3). At the opposite end of the spectrum, Augustine Akpelu voiced the aims of the festival in terms similar to its organizers: 'FESTAC [...] enables us to see our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world and their true colour. It made us see we are one people, regardless of whatever part of the globe we come from' (3). Several interviewees complained about the festival's costs given that the general economy was failing to meet the needs of the average worker. As Andrew Apter shows in *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria*, the economic and military situation in Nigeria shaped the logistics and meaning-making at the festival in complex ways that even these impromptu readers' commentaries gesture towards.

Drum's coverage highlighted the festival's expected dividends for tourism. The reviews of two general book introductions to Nigeria by European authors in the March 1977 issue certainly reflected this agenda, for what need did a Nigerian magazine reader have for a coffee-table book about their home nation? Curiously, one of the few text articles that covered a performance during FESTAC, Alistair Abrahams' feature on Stevie Wonder, 'Super Star's Songs Rule the World', which ran in the June 1977 issue, noted only in passing that Wonder was in town for the arts festival, and ran a photograph of an impromptu performance with the British Afro-pop group Osibisa and Miriam Makeba. While FESTAC itself was incidental to the article (which focused far more on the author's interview with and impressions of Wonder), the image reiterated a recurring theme, that the most rewarding part of the experience for artist participants was the opportunity to improvise and converse in the sometimes precarious lodgings at the Artists' Village. Oumar Ly's official report on the Senegalese delegation's experiences similarly indicates that such exchanges made FESTAC a success in the view of the artists despite significant tensions over the displacement of Alioune Diop and other Senegalese figures from the planning process.³

Conclusion

The magazines examined here addressed greatly diverse audiences and the political contexts in which each was published was unique. However, the coverage in these magazines is strikingly congruent with documentation published elsewhere: in the memoirs of attendees like Duke Ellington in 1966 and Hoyt Fuller in 1969, or in the official reports of Oumar Ly in 1977. Whether from the perspective of elite artists and government appointees or from the standpoint of non-elite audiences surveyed by the magazines, judgements on the value of the large-scale pan-African festivals, and thus the measure of their success, did not depend on performances of modernity such as the smooth functioning of tickets and programming, the construction of impressive venues, the sophistication of ideas at symposia or even the range and quality of art works and performances assembled. Rather, these accounts stress the indelible impression left on the artists by face-to-face live exchanges with peers from other parts of the pan-African world and the spectacle of live expressions of international black cultural resonance. The popular magazines most vividly conveyed these elements in the candid shots of conversations and other interactions and in the informal voices of eyewitnesses whether on staff or in the letters and gossip sections of the magazines. At these festivals what George Shepperson (1962) has called 'little p pan-Africanism' emerged

3 Archives Nationales du Sénégal. Rapport sur la vie de la délégation sénégalaise installée au Village du Festival, Lagos: 10 janvier–16 février 1977, OL/AD République du Sénégal/Ministère de la Culture.

from the interactions of both artists and the little people whom we glimpse through the accounts in these popular black magazines. For while African American artists who travelled to the festivals received a warm welcome at first hand, one important fruit of the coverage in *Ebony*, *Jet* and *Negro Digest/Black World* and others was to extend to a broader public the opportunity to participate in emerging diasporic and pan-Africanist modes of identification.