

## African urbanites camp-down in the English countryside

"Supported by the Melanin Rich Community  
and Arts Council England"

### Shanti-Chi



### MEDIA KIT

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shanti-chi presents

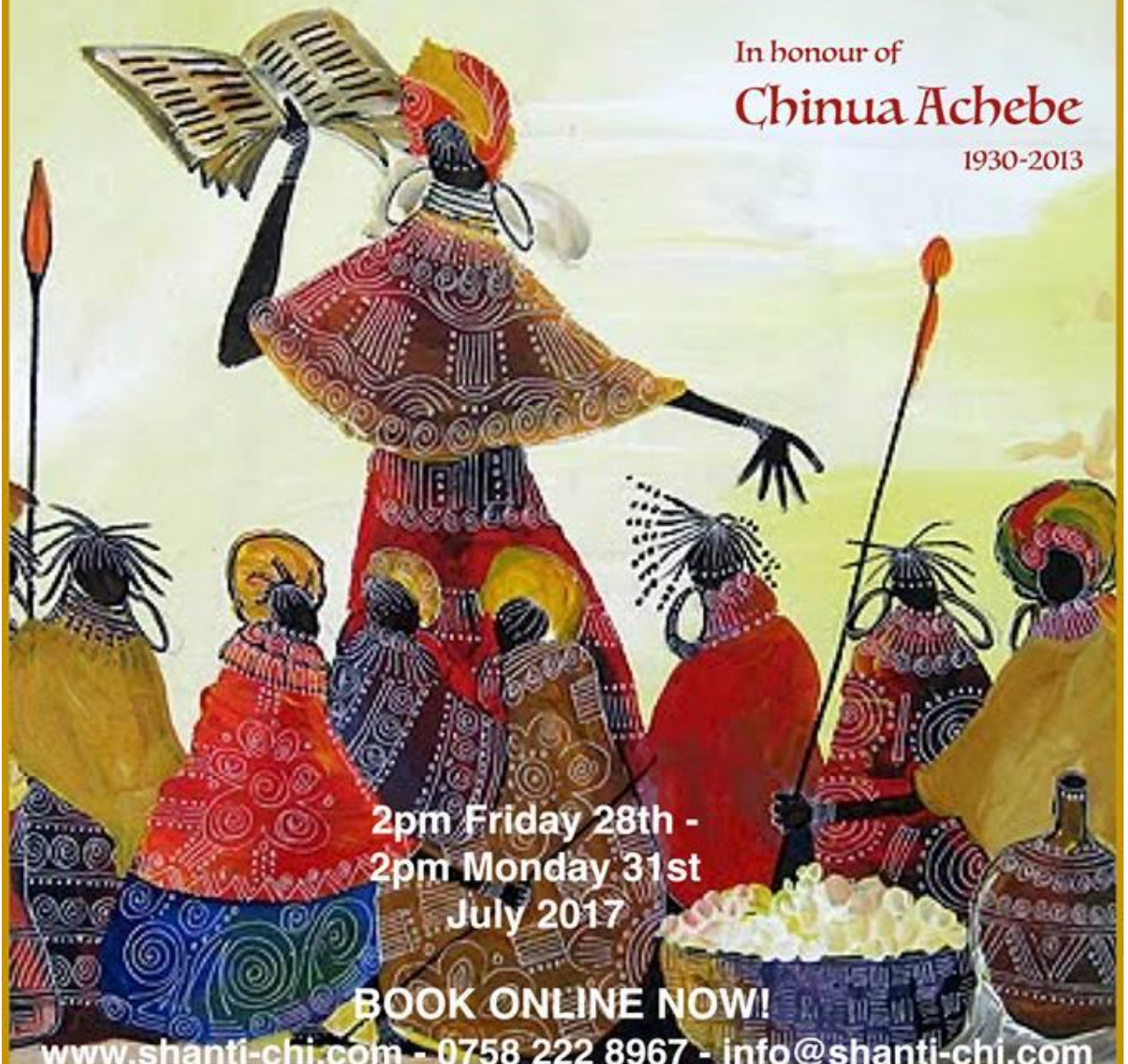
# Nne Agwu

## Afrakan Storytelling Festival

In honour of

Chinua Achebe

1930-2013



2pm Friday 28th -  
2pm Monday 31st  
July 2017

**BOOK ONLINE NOW!**

[www.shanti-chi.com](http://www.shanti-chi.com) - 0758 222 8967 - [info@shanti-chi.com](mailto:info@shanti-chi.com)



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**Shanti-Chi** is an African storytelling company established in 2010, based in London founded by [Griot Chinyere](#) as a vision to spread the magic of storytelling and keep the oral tradition alive. In an increasingly digital world, where we are "more connected" with each other technologically, however, we are less connected with our spiritual well-being of life; meeting with people, learning amongst people, sharing and creating memories in real time, communing with nature, is crucial. Making a conscious effort to get involved with our community will make the difference to our creative and spiritual well-being.

A large part of what we do encompasses the natural environment and understanding how to harness positive energy from being surrounded by it. Especially with busy city life, we all need to take time to breathe deeply and remember Mother Earth. Having worked with; young people, toddlers, prisoners, people with disabilities and exposed them to the powers of African Storytelling, we conclude this is a necessary mission.

[https://www.shanti-chi.com/thank-you?lightbox=image\\_bf1](https://www.shanti-chi.com/thank-you?lightbox=image_bf1)



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## PROGRAMME

This year's Nne Agwu Afrakan Storytelling Festival is in honour of the engaging and talented [Chinua Achebe](#). His indomitable spirit as the Godfather of Igbo literature has played an essential role inspiring visions with the oral tradition of African storytelling. We are thankful to our most esteemed ancestor. We affirm his spirit will grace us as we honour his life. Come and join us to make this a truly beautiful and wonderful occasion. The Nne Agwu storytelling festival aims to nourish you with first class global storytellers; gathering this summer to captivate your imagination and conjure magic using the power of the oral tradition.



**Award winning Griot Chinyere** is a national and international grassroots storyteller, the artistic director for Shanti-Chi and the founder of the Nne Agwu Afrakan Storytelling festival. She is focused on developing the African storytelling artistry in the UK. She has travelled across Africa, Europe and the Middle East gathering knowledge and experience on the oral traditions. Her performances throughout the world blends her skills as a movement stylist and character actor to tell dynamic and lyrical stories with a wonderful sense of playfulness that makes you part of the story, and reverence for the deeper meaning of spirituality in storytelling. Griot is presently working with the Leadership Trust training Higher Education heads of departments in over 50 universities throughout the UK applying the techniques of the oral traditions.



**Jane Ulysses Grell** is a storyteller, writer, teacher, poet and singer. She was born and grew up on the Caribbean island of Dominica. Her poetry and storytelling are imbued with the love of the music of words in the spirit of the vibrant African-Caribbean Oral Tradition. Jane has worked extensively with children, young people and adults in most London boroughs and presented stories and poetry for BBC Radio Schools' Programmes.



**Beyonder** is a regular contributor to the poetry/spoken word scene in the UK and internationally, he uses spoken word to convey African stories with a narrative and characters we can identify with. Beyonder is a multiple-slam winner. His titles include the



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prestigious Urban Griots Poetry UK Slam Championship (in 2 000 & 2001), the Lyrical Court All-Stars Grand Slam (2003) and the Born to Shine Poetry Slam.



**Eli Anderson** uses the ancient craft of storytelling to reflect positively upon the critical issues of life. He enjoys the opportunity to share this craft through storytelling in a variety of environments where people are seeking intuitive answers to difficult and challenging questions. These places include formal (school, colleges, etc) and informal educational spaces, community and healthcare centres, hospitals, etc.



**Melika Queely** has been playing the violin since the tender age of 4!! After finishing a degree in Music at Wolverhampton University in 2009 she has begun to embark on her career as a violinist and also a teacher of music. Playing music of different genres from Classical to Reggae, Gospel and Rock. Melika has toured Paris, Holland, and Switzerland with orchestras and has performed at various events in the UK as part of a string quartet and as a solo violinist. Making music is her passion, and combined with her appreciation of fashion and art, Melika delivers powerful performances which are unique, stylish and full of creativity!



**Zozo Shuaibu** is a singer, multi-instrumentalist, writer, storyteller and music producer, born in Sierra Leone of Nigerian parents. He has worked extensively with bands, theatre and dance companies in Africa and the UK, and is much in demand for his experience and expertise in, music production, storytelling and drumming workshops in schools. Zozo is an expert storyteller drawing on his West African Heritage and his own creativity.



**Ken Yahw** has produced a large body of work from set designs to totem carvings. Drawing on his rich cultural heritage, his art work explores



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personal growth & celebrates harmony. During his studies of word carving when in Ghana 89 – 90, he observed the carvers at work. Learning their techniques was a mesmerizing meditative and inspiring process. His serene approach and his ability while working with traditional hand tools, to transform the oral storytelling into a wood carving, using recycled and natural materials, to inspire original art, makes him an ideal Artist in residence for the Nne Agwu festival. Ken will hold a central space carving a storytelling totem for the Nne Agwu festival.



**Angie Amra Anderson** BA (Hons) has contributed to the research and development of African and Caribbean arts since 1974. She co-founded the pioneering award-winning Ekome National Dance Company, which took England and Europe by storm for over a decade. She is known to innumerable records of students as a very charismatic teacher and has presented countless performances in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and Scandinavia. In October 2016, she received her first 'Lifetime Achievement Award' and the 'Cultural Ambassador of the Year Award' from the Baoboa Foundation.



**Amantha Edmead** has developed a passion for storytelling! Working as a storyteller for pre -schools, schools, community groups, events, and festivals. She specialises in African and Caribbean stories and storytelling techniques. Her storytelling style is about engaging the audience in the telling and creating of the tales and shaping the outcome together. I have also performed in theatre in education tours, children's theatre and children's television.

<https://www.shanti-chi.com/festival-programme>

***Afrakan: A person of African heritage connecting body and soul to the element of the sun; enabling a natural and productive way of being.***

***(AF – Body, Ra – Sun, Ka - Soul)***



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## PRESS COVERAGE 2016/15

### Campout in forest to honour Jamaican folklorist Miss Lou -



**BLACK PEOPLE** from all over the country are flocking to a camping ground in honour of the late Jamaican poet and folklorist Dr Louise Bennett-Coverley - affectionately known as Miss Lou. Shanti-Chi presents their fifth annual festival; Nne Agwu Afrakan Storytelling Festival 2016, in honour of Miss Lou, commemorating a decade since her passing, the Jamaican folklorist will be at the heart of this year's festival. Ensuring Miss Lou's legacy is passed on to future generations and her monumental contribution to the oral art-form is appropriately celebrated.

Held at Debden House Campsite, Epping Forest IG10 2NZ, from Friday July 29 – Monday August 1, the family friendly weekend of camping has been extended this year by a whole day, with the addition of; a fully developed crafts market, a wellness corner and children's. The festival responds to the conversations and evident hunger in our community for practical progress to augment ourselves, our family and each other, to take charge of our history and heritage. This unique event places importance on uniting the diaspora, creating a space where the community can exchange ideas, knowledge and skills whilst rediscovering the wonders of nature.

Our children have their imaginations switched on and heads down writing creatively with dreams of winning the Nne Agwu Afrakan Short Story Writing Competition 2016. The winners will receive: a certificate and their story will be performed by a professional storyteller at the festival. The main aim of Shanti-Chi is to present, promote and preserve the culture of our oral traditions. Look forward to healthy tasty catering on site, early morning yoga and night forest walks with a round the clock fire. First-aid trained volunteers are on hand to help you set up and pack down your tents and guide you through the festival experience. We welcome first time campers.

[Source: Voice Online: 10/06/2016 01:44 PM](#)

### Storyteller Griot Chinyere inspires inner city families to enjoy nature



AN AFRICAN storyteller is taking part in a solo 100-mile sponsored walk to encourage inner city families to commune with nature for health and well-being.

Award-winning storyteller and artistic director of Shanti-Chi, Griot Chinyere, aims to encourage, inspire and invite her community to appreciate the well-being that comes with walking amongst trees, listening to the dawn chorus and watching squirrels scurry. She also wants people to know about the healing that comes from sitting under the stars around a fire while sharing stories.

Chinyere is now in training for her sponsored 100-mile walk, which is set for next month June.

Her company, Shanti-Chi, is a storytelling expedition company, and aims to contribute in transforming African heritage people's over-representation in health care, mental health and incarceration.

This 'storytelling village' is to be a supportive space for participants to appreciate the power of the great outdoors with activities including camping, walking, yoga, storytelling, wood chopping, fire building, tent erecting and tree climbing.

"A breath of clean air works wonders on our respiratory systems while sunlight generates vitamin D and activates the melanin," says Chinyere.

She adds: "The forest is calming. Nature nurtures creativity while sounding like a well-rehearsed orchestra.

"Mother earth smells divine. Naturally running water balances the emotions. The dark skies set our biological clocks straight.

"Outdoors activities contribute to improving personal, social and emotional levels. Mother earth supports rapid healing and recovery as the arms of nature embrace us.

[Source: Voice Online: 27/05/2015 04:49 PM](#)

## 2016 festival goers 'fell in love' and shared their thoughts.....

*There is a gentle balance of positive vibes and overstanding that I experienced. Thank you all for putting together such a divine experience.*

*This year's storytelling festival was the most outstanding phenomenal exciting weekend of my life. This is the second year I have been camping and although I love my creature comforts this I didn't mind as I was surrounded by beautiful greenery; beautiful spirits which appreci-liked being outdoors in nature awaiting to hear some original authentic African stories, spoken from some of Britain's highly sought after storytellers.*



*Wow...this weekend away was absolutely fantastic! Thank you to my friend for letting me know about it, I will continue to go every year from this point forward! There was a real community spirit there, I've never felt so comfortable, surrounded by a 'village' of positive and such welcoming people. My children have thanked me and said it was such an amazing experience. We honestly cannot wait for next years' Storytelling Festival!*

*I fell in love at the 2016 storytelling festival (my first time there) - my family met friends that have now become family and I have told others that they must attend this year's event.*



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PRESS RELEASE

**African urbanites camp-down in the English countryside**

**Nne Agwu Afrakan Storytelling Festival is honouring the legacy of the Great African orator Chinua Achebe at the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary storytelling festival presented by Shanti-Chi.** The increasing popularity of Nne Agwu, was recognised for its enriching storytelling ability by the Arts Council, which awarded them a grant towards this years' storytelling extravaganza. Festival founder, Griot Chinyere said; "In this our sixth year, we can afford to pay our storytellers, Hip Hop Amen Ra!"

Shanti-Chi will welcome hundreds of individuals and families from the African & African Caribbean communities to Chiltern Hills Parmoor Farm Frieth, RG9 6PS in Oxfordshire during the last weekend of July; (Friday 28<sup>th</sup> – Monday 31<sup>st</sup>). Families and friends will explore camping with a difference, by interacting in; storytelling workshops and performances, health and wellbeing sessions, early morning yoga, arts, crafts, stimulating night walks in beautiful woodlands and other inspirational activities.

Under midnight skies, immersed by the warmth of camp fires, festival goers will be reminded of tales told by their ancestors, by enchanting storyteller Griot Chinyere, who will be joined by an ensemble of rhythmical and engaging narrators including; Baba Ade, Jane Grell, Eli Anderson, Angie Amra, Beyonder and resident wood carver Ken Yahw Arts; these spinners of tales are honing in on African heritage, educating families and guiding communities to connect with their natural way of being as they re-evolve. Shanti-chi invites African/African Caribbean families on a 4-day camp-down to explore the art of the oral tradition of storytelling, reignite the imagination, unburden the impact of ongoing gentrification of the urban jungle and experience what previous participants described as; "visually stimulating storytelling", "a gentle balance of positive vibes", "*an outstanding phenomenal weekend.*"

Advanced booking for day or weekend passes should be purchased through [www.shanti-chi.com/ticket deals](http://www.shanti-chi.com/ticket-deals), please follow the online links for further information on group discounts, travel, what to bring and much more; early bird bookings for tickets available until 14th May 2017. Stalls holders are advised to make enquiry and book early to secure their space;

**Notes to editor:**

Shanti-Chi's team are **trained oral historians; capturing the story of the individual, the family, the community (in whatever form that may take). We are professional storytellers working with the ancestral patterns and energies which govern a story structure.** Over the years as the Storytelling festival evolves, the aim has remained constant; to create a space in nature where we can come to share, learn about and create our heritage and culture using the oral traditions. Griot Chinyere's vision is for the Diaspora community to gather outdoors, as we do back home, to celebrate, preserve and promote our culture through the storytelling art form.

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