

Bob Ramdhanie

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Bob Ramdhanie was born in Trinidad which is a twin island with Tobago. At school he studied a number of languages including Latin and Spanish.

He came to the UK by boat in the 70s to further his studies by doing a City and Guilds course and go to University. He settled in London since he had a brother and sister there, with early ambitions to be an Electrical Engineer. However his real passion was the Church being of the Presbyterian faith.

He went to University in Leicester to gain his Electrical Engineering degree but once this was complete he decided to train as a social worker, graduating as a Probation Officer! He took up his first post in Handsworth in 1977 and he has lived in and around the area ever since.

He has always been interested in The Arts and while in post, worked with both young clients and other interested young people after work and at weekends. On the upstairs landing of the probation service office they often worked late into the night, further developing their interest and talent in music and dance. He also approached Oaklands Community Centre about working with young people through the Arts there on Saturdays.

Bob was instrumental in securing a building next to the probation service office in Handsworth, just one year after taking up his first job where he and the service could 'officially' work with young people through the medium of the Arts. It was called the Handsworth Cultural Centre. It rapidly became the place to be for young people in the area and much talent was nurtured there. One such talent were a group of dancers called Kokuma, who Bob helped to form. They are now the longest serving Black Dance Group in the UK.

Bob left the cultural centre after being invited to set up the Community Arts Village Entertainment (The CAVE) in Highgate close to Moseley. It was while working here that he and a friend, Carol Pemberton formed Black Voices, an accapella quintet. Black voices have travelled all over the world performing in some of the most prestigious venues. Wherever they go they also do workshops with children in schools.

Bob has been and continues to be involved in pushing Black Arts into the mainstream, and during the 1980s he broadcast the Ebony Radio Magazine Programme and the Calaloo programme for local radio. He is also an alumni of John Hopkins University