



YURUMEIN

HOMELAND

yurumeinmovie@gmail.com

www.andrealeland.com

Yurumein (Homeland)

*Review: Oliver N. Greene, PhD Ethnomusicology
Georgia State University*

50-minutes, completed January 2014

DVD format / 4:3 aspect ratio / surround sound

“The film *Yurumein (Homeland): the Story of the Caribs of St. Vincent*, is a moving portrayal of reflections on the history and subsequent cultural genocide of the indigenous people of St. Vincent in the eastern Caribbean. The Caribs are the Native American ancestors of the Garifuna (ca. 400,000) of Central America. The director, Andrea Leland, successfully intertwines reflections by local Caribs who recall past experiences of cultural marginalization and express pride in celebrating an ancestry that remains a regional symbol of resistance and survival. The film beautifully captures the thoughts and raw emotions of individuals of the Garifuna Diaspora from Los Angeles, Honduras, and Belize who return to Yurumein (the indigenous word for St. Vincent), the homeland or place origin of the people. A physician from Los Angeles returns, after a long absence, to rediscover his ancestry. As he travels the island he reflects on the absence of historical markers that verify a Carib presence and visits a fort that displays signs of the late 18th century war between the Garifuna and the British. Leland interviews members of the National Garifuna Folklore Ballet of Honduras who visit Yurumein to connect with their cultural homeland and to reintroduce the indigenous music that were lost following defeat by the British. (The British forbade the use of Garifuna music, language, and dance by those who were allowed to remain on the island.)

Leland includes footage of Baliceaux, a nearby island where half of the more than 5000 darker-skinned Garifuna awaiting exile, died of starvation. Those who survived were sent to Central America—Honduras first, and then later they travelled to Belize, Guatemala, and Nicaragua—where they currently reside and have maintained their indigenous practices. Leland captures scenes of a Garifuna ritual commemorating the ancestors who perished on Baliceaux, and the cries of a Belizean Garifuna woman overcome by the memories of the sufferings of her ancestors. Throughout the film such reflections are interspersed with interviews of local scholars, novice historians, and cultural preservationists. The film concludes with scenes from National Hero’s Day celebrations, where the Prime Minister and school children alike express pride in Joseph Chatoyer (the Paramount Garifuna Chief and a symbol of resistance to the British) and in Carib/Garifuna culture itself. *Yurumein (Homeland)* . . . affectively blends personal reflections with historical and cultural data that make the film appropriate for novice viewers as well as scholars and students of the arts, humanities, and social sciences. For additional information on the Garifuna history and culture see Leland’s film entitled *The Garifuna Journey*. ”