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Yurumein (Homeland)

***Review: Morris A. Phibbs, Deputy Director
Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College, Chicago***

50-minutes, completed January 2014

DVD format / 4:3 aspect ratio / surround sound

"The Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago is honored to be the repository for documentary filmmaker Andrea Leland's film The Garifuna Journey (1998). The collection, which includes Leland's production notes, the original videocassettes, sound cassettes, and logs for the film provides resources and materials that document the Garifuna people in Belize and their culture. Leland has now completed a new documentary, Yurumein (2013), which tells the history of the Caribe people, who in 1796 were violently expelled by British colonial forces from their homeland island of St. Vincent. All but a very small handful of the Caribe people were exiled to the island of Balliceaux, where most were killed or died, amounting to the almost total extermination of the Garifuna people and their culture. The few Caribes who survived the genocide were plunged into a 200-plus-year period of subjugation, discrimination, and humiliation.

Leland's new film vividly and sympathetically portrays the resiliency of the culture and the drive of its people to reclaim their cultural heritage, including the nearly defunct Garifuna language. The film culminates in the documentation of St. Vincent's National Hero's Day in 2012(??), which featured a tribute to the Caribes' tribal leader, Joseph Chatoyer, who was killed in battle against the British forces in 1795. There are moving scenes of youngsters being encouraged to learn and speak the nearly defunct Garifuna language and a performance by a Garifuna dance troupe from Honduras, who made a pilgrimage to Balliceaux island. Leland presents the Caribe story with gorgeous video images, individual commentaries, and lots of music and dance. This film is highly recommended. Leland has again named the CBMR as the repository for the production materials, which are available for on-site use by everyone. Please visit www.CBMR.colum.edu/cbmr/library."