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## DR CARLOS MOORE'S "FELA: THIS BITCH OF A LIFE" MEDIA PACK

### **PRESS RELEASE**

Sometimes it seems that Fela has never been so popular across the world as he is today. With **Fela the Musical** (produced by Jay-Z and choreographed by Bill T. Jones) a smash hit on Broadway and **Fela** the film (starring Chiwetel Ejiofor, who else?) in production, Fela is rapidly becoming a global superstar for the next generation.

There is therefore no better time then for the re-publication of **Fela: This Bitch of a Life** - the authorised biography of Africa's greatest ever musician, Fela Anikulapo Kuti. The book first published 28 years ago, is written in the first person, so reads like an autobiography. The full technicolour honesty of the writing makes it seem like the reader is engaged in a one-to-one conversation with the King of Afro-beat himself.

In just under 350 pages, the reader is invited to the living room of Fela's iconoclastic mind, discovering from the inside the key turning points in his life – his childhood in Abeokuta and the forceful influence of his parents, especially his mother; student life in England; his coming to black consciousness in America (and his encounters with Funk and some of the key players in African-American musical and political culture); his return to Nigeria and setting up the Shrine and Kalakuta Republic and his increasingly painful struggles with the authorities in Nigeria in the 1970s and 1980s. Reading about Fela brings to life post-Independence African history in all its turbulence and drama. The book also includes interviews with some of Fela's wives, allowing the reader to get an intimate perspective on Fela as a husband *and* as a lover.

**Fela: This Bitch of a Life** was first published in 1982. The new version, published by Cassava Republic, includes remarkable never-before-seen content: a Preface by renowned Brazilian musician and statesman Gilberto Gil, a Prologue by Fela's friend Lindsay Barrett, an introduction and a moving epilogue by Carlos Moore written specially for this edition and discography. It also includes the two part magnificently illustrated *Afa Ojo* sections, which delve into the mystical aspects of Fela's character. The cover and artwork for this new version were designed by Lemi Ghariokwu, the original designer of some of Fela's most iconic album covers. The book is set to become a



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collector's item and to take pride of place on bookshelves across the continent.

With Nigeria set to celebrate 50 years of Independence on October 1<sup>st</sup>, there is perhaps no better time for a reflection on some of the country's heroes, social and political history. Fela's music is guaranteed to outlive us all becoming part of our own classical; it is therefore equally important for future generations (and younger African children today) to have the opportunity to find out more about Fela the man and Fela's music.

Cassava Republic's Publishing Director, Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, says "We are very excited to make Carlos Moore's classic and illuminating biography of Fela Kuti available for the first time on the continent. We also believe that everyone interested in African music and socio-political history will not want to miss the opportunity to own a copy of this particular edition."

### **THE BOOK TOUR**

To celebrate the publication of *Fela: This Bitch of a Life*, the author, Dr Carlos Moore, will be touring Nigeria in October. The tour events will be the only place where the book will be available before it goes on general release in January 2011. The tour presents a fantastic opportunity to have the book signed by the author itself and to be among the first few hundred people to own the book on the continent. Apart from the Mon 11<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> **all events will attract an entry fee of N2000** (which includes a copy of the book). The tour dates for Nigeria are as follows:

DATE & TIME	VENUE
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> October, 4pm	<b>Centre for Contemporary Arts</b> , 9 McEwen St, Sabo, Lagos (book reading with special guests)
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> October, 4pm	<b>Life House</b> , 33 Sinari Daranijo St, off Younis Bashoroun St, off Ajoye Adeogun, Victoria Island, Lagos (with live band)
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> October, 10am	<b>The New Africa Shrine</b> , NERDC Road, Agidingbi, Ikeja, Lecture, " <b>Fela: Music is the Weapon</b> " (Symposium second in a series tagged "The Fela Debates")
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> October, 11am	<b>Unilag</b> , Faculty of Arts Boardroom (in conjunction with CBAAC). Public Lecture: " <b>What is Africa to me?: Fela Kuti and the reshaping of the Pan-African Dream in the post-colonial Era</b> "
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> October, 4pm	<b>French Cultural Centre</b> , 52 Libreville Street, Off Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse 2 (book reading)

**NB to Journalists:** If journalists would like to interview Dr Carlos Moore, they can do so on the 9<sup>th</sup> from 2 – 4pm *but it will need to be pre-arranged*. Please email [editor@cassavarepublic.biz](mailto:editor@cassavarepublic.biz).

## **CARLOS MOORE BIOGRAPHY**

Born in Cuba in 1942, Dr. Charles Moore is a naturalized Jamaican. An ethnologist and political scientist, he earned two doctorates (Human Sciences, Ethnology) from the University of Paris-7, in France. His life-long interest in African, Latin American and Caribbean politics and culture resulted in various posts at universities worldwide and many academic studies on race and ethnicity. He was Visiting Professor at Florida International University (FIU), from 1986 to 1988; Senior Lecturer of international relations at the University of the West Indies (UWI), from 1996 to 2000; personal consultant on Latin American Affairs to Dr. Edem KODJO, Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OUA), from 1982-83, and to Dr. Edwin Carrington, Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), from 1996 to 2000.

From 1970 to 1983, Moore worked as political analyst for Agence France-Presse and the Weekly Jeune Afrique. He was a research assistant to the Senegalese scholar and scientist, Cheikh Anta Diop (1975 to 1980). In 1987, he convened the "First International Conference on Negritude," at Florida International University (FIU), in Miami, in homage of Aimé Césaire.

Moore's published works include: *O Marxismo e a Questão Racial* (Nandyala Editora, 2010); *Fela: This Bitch of a Life* (Cassava Republic Press, 2010; Lawrence Hill Books, 2009; Allison & Busby, 1982); *Pichón. Race and Revolution in Castro's Cuba* (Lawrence Hill Books, 2008); *A África que Incomoda* (Nandyala Editora, 2010, 2008); *Racismo e Sociedade* (Mazza Edições, 2007); *African Presence in the Americas* (Africa World Press, 1995); *Castro the Blacks and Africa* (CASS/UCLA, 1988); *Cette Putain de Vie* (Éditions Karthala, 1982).

Moore resides permanently in Brazil with his family and divides his time between lectures in the US and his life-long research on race relations in Latin America.

## **BLURBS**

"I want each and every African to feel that s/he OWNS Fela; that his legacy must be defended as a vital part of the Pan-African dream is burning in our hearts. That is why I did the book – at Fela's request, yes, but at my own urging." — **Carlos Moore**

"Fela was an incredible pioneer. His rhythms and influence have been absorbed into so much of the music around today, and the musical world owes him a debt of gratitude." — **Stevie Wonder**

"An amazing musical genius with a boisterous sense of humor, Fela was an immovable rock in his fight against corruption. Surviving several immoral military regimes, it is a miracle that he died from natural causes rather than their torture." — **Hugh Masekela**

"Fela Anikulapo Kuti was James Brown, Huey Newton, Rick James, Bob Marley, Duke Ellington and ODB all rolled up in one black African fist..." - **Mos Def**

"Fela is still a voice for Nigerians. He brought our struggles and social challenges to the fore. It's vital for us to use his life and music as a reference point for social consciousness. Fela protects our identity and reminds those in power to respect our rights as young Africans." — **Naeto C**

"His music was exotic, royal, powerful, and captured the spirit of Mother Africa. He was respected and loved not only for his music but for his intellect and his dedication to African traditions. Fela was one of the most courageous individuals I have ever met." — **Randy Weston**

"Fela's biography is important to us all now because it sounds like he is speaking to us from the world beyond. It goes with our aphorism which says that 'Fela Lives.' He lives in the minds and hearts of us all who knew and loved him and to whom he imparted so much knowledge and joy. I personally look forward to reading this book once again, as it provides so much understanding into the mind of such a GREAT MAN." — **Femi Kuti**

"**Fela: This Bitch of a Life** was my first-ever book [...] Spiritual growth for me started there." — **Seun Anikulapo Kuti**

"Africa's most important musical export." — **Africa Music**

"He has influenced music in Africa more than anyone else." — **Guardian**

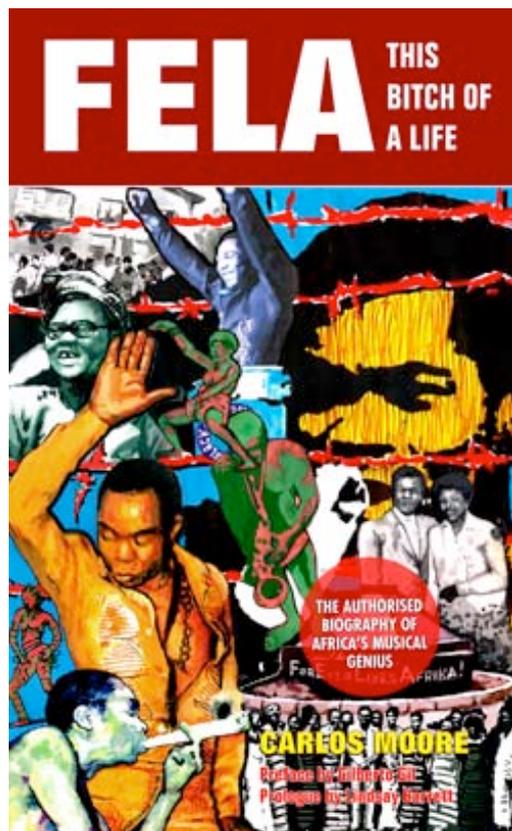
"The most influential and significant musician ever to emerge from Africa." — **Time Out**

**IMAGES**

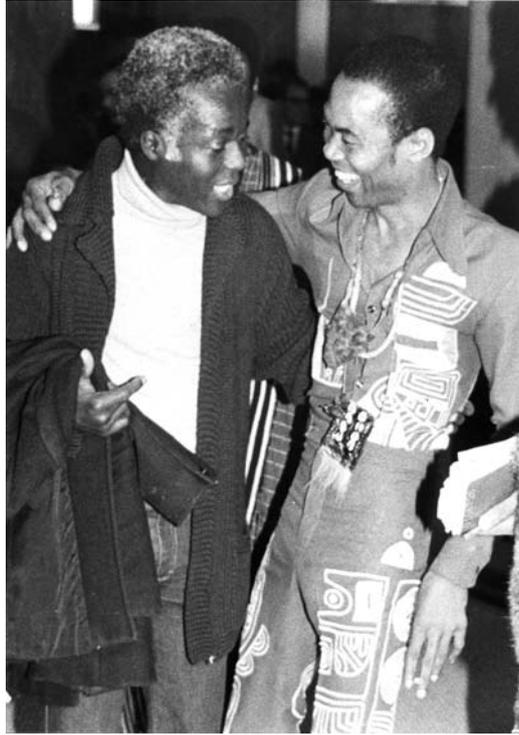
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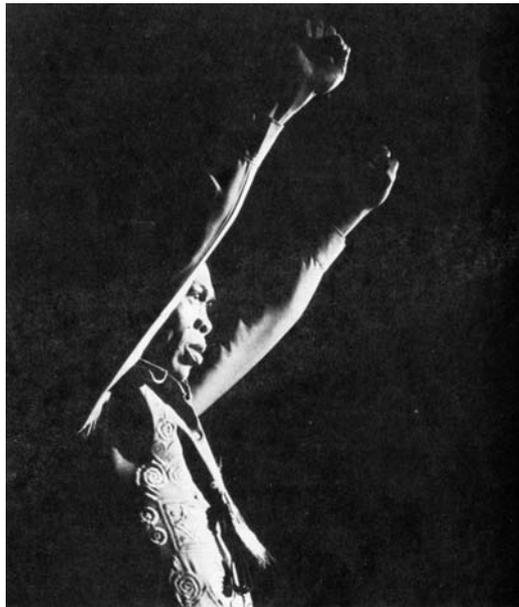
**Dr Carlos Moore**



**Front cover designed by Lemi Ghariokwu**



**Carlos and Fela**



**Defiant Fela**



**Omolara**



**Fela's family**