

Finding a Home

Text by Sydney Guillaume and Kevin Ramsden
In collaboration with the Young Men's Ensemble of the Boston Children's Chorus

Our drum has lost its beat, *Tanbou nou pèdi kadans,**
There's displacement under our feet. *Nou santi nou depeyize.*
As we walk along these foreign lands,
We will find a home again.

A home isn't confined to a place.
It's a community, a warm embrace.
Our memories will never die, *Pa gen souvni k'ap janm pèdi,*
If we seek the rhythms of our past. *Si nou chèche tanbou zansèt nou yo.*

It's in our journey we find a home, *Se nan chimen lavi nou jwenn lakay.*
Embracing change and sharing lives.
Let the tears of anguish run dry,
Our life is here, our home is here.

Listen to the rhythms of our feet,
Our drum has found its beat. *Tanbou nou reprann kadans.*
Da-da-dumm, Ta-ka-doum,
We found a home again. We found a home.

**Haitian Creole poetic translation*

INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET

Tanbou nou pèdi kadans,
['tābu nu pe'dzi ka'dās]
Nou santi nou depeyize.
[nu sā'tsi nu 'depejize]
Pa gen souvni k'ap janm pèdi,
[pa gē suv'ni kap zām pe'dzi]
Si nou chèche tanbou zansèt nou yo.
[si nu 'ʃeʃe tā'bu zā'set nu jo]
Se nan chimen lavi nou jwenn lakay.
[se nā ʃi'mē la'vi nu zwēn la'kai]
Tanbou nou reprann kadans.
['tābu nu re'prān ka'dās]
Yon kominote zigidapap padap padadap
[jō ko'minote zigi'dapap pa'dap pada'dap]

Sou tout chimen lavi nou,
[su tut 'ʃimē la'vi nu]
Si nou chèche n'ap jwenn lakay.
[si nu 'ʃeʃe nap jwēn la'kai]
Ay'bobo! wo ou-wo ou-woy woy
['aibobo wo u'wo u'woi woi]
zinga Welele we-e-e zingawala-oh
['zinga 'welele we-e-e 'zingawala o]
Doubalele dumberalala
['dumbalele 'dumberalala]
Da-da-dumm, ta-ka-doum
[dā dā 'dām taka'dum]
zop-po-go-do, zo-pop-pop po-do pop-podo
[zop pogo'do 'zopoppop 'po-do poppo'do]

About the work

Finding a Home is a hopeful testament to the immigrant experience as well as anyone who has felt displacement. It was written during a global pandemic and immense social tension in the United States. This composition blends English and Haitian Creole to connect different cultures. In collaboration with the Boston Children's Chorus, Sydney Guillaume and Kevin Ramsden have come together to create a work that helps us re-imagine a home. The piece takes you on a journey that validates the anguish from feeling out of place, and also celebrates the homes we have found and the ones we have yet to discover.

For an audio pronunciation guide and individual practice tracks, go to: sydneyguillaume.com/practice-tracks