

For Immediate Release

7/05/2006

Media Contact: Victoria Kirby

415/333-5110

AfroSolo Arts Festival Info:

415/771-AFRO (2376)

**AFROSOLO ARTS FESTIVAL XIII
CELEBRATES AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTISTS
AUGUST 1 - SEPTEMBER 16, 2006 - SAN FRANCISCO, CA**

The AfroSolo Theatre Company celebrates its thirteenth annual **AfroSolo Arts Festival**, a celebration of African American artists giving voice to the Black experience, August 1 through September 16, 2006, at two venues in San Francisco, CA. The title of this year's festival is ***United In Health: Artists, Health Workers and Community***.

Founded in 1993 by Artistic Director Thomas Robert Simpson, AfroSolo's mission is to nurture, promote and present African American art and culture through solo performances, and the visual and literary arts. Because of the disparity in health matters in our community, we made a bold decision to make Black Health the theme of this year's Festival. Our solo artists will unite with health and medical professionals to promote health, prevent disease and provide incentives to develop healthy habits in the African American community. **AfroSolo Arts Festival XIII** will focus on health in general, but pay particular attention to breast cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and prostate cancer.

AfroSolo Arts Festival XIII will present its sixth free outdoor jazz concert in Yerba Buena Gardens, curate its ninth annual visual arts exhibition, produce *Black Voices* - a solo performance series, and host a health fair. For more information, contact AfroSolo at: 415/771-AFRO (2376) or go online at: www.afrosolo.org.

The **AfroSolo Arts Festival** has presented celebrity guests, such as the award-winning Broadway actor Ruby Dee; political humorist and activist Dick Gregory; the late blues and jazz legend Charles Brown; the beloved poet, writer, and teacher June Jordan; Hall of Fame member Mavis Staples; and gospel artist Emmitt Powell. In addition, the **AfroSolo Arts Festival** has presented the works of over 115 emerging solo artists.

SCHEDULE FOR AFROSOLO ARTS FESTIVAL XIII

Visual Art Exhibit: Stephanie Anne Johnson: Art, Theater & Testimony

When: August 1 - September 16

Where: African American Art & Culture Complex, 762 Fulton Street, SF

Artist Reception: Thursday, August 10, 6 - 8 pm

Tickets: FREE

In the first retrospective show of Johnson's thirty-two years as lighting designer for theater and dance and her twenty-two years as a conceptual visual artist, she will premiere a commissioned work exploring health in the African American community. Johnson's work embodies her commitment to ancestral homage and community activism.

AfroSolo's Jazz in the Gardens

When: Saturday, August 5, 1 - 4 pm

Where: Yerba Buena Gardens, Mission Street between 3rd & 4th Streets

Tickets: FREE

Featuring: Idris Ackamoor Ensemble, Avotcja and Modupue, and Carl Winters.

In collaboration with Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, **AfroSolo Arts Festival** presents its seventh free jazz concert in Yerba Buena Gardens. Bring a lunch and blanket and enjoy a wonderful afternoon of jazz.

Idris Ackamoor Quartet: Idris Ackamoor is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, actor, tap dancer, director, videographer and producer. He is the Founder and Co-Artistic Director of the San Francisco performance company Cultural Odyssey. Under his leadership the company has become internationally recognized for artistic excellence. Ackamoor's primary instrument is the alto saxophone. An accomplished tap dancer, Ackamoor's signature performance is his uncanny ability to combine tap dancing with playing his saxophone simultaneously: a one-of-a-kind act. He has also performed with percussionist Don Moye of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Saxophonists

Chico Freeman & John Tchicai, dancer/choreographer Bill T. Jones, writer/poet Ntozake Shange, and many others. Ackamoor has received many awards for his work.

Avotcja and Modupue Avotcja is an outright tour de force, poet, musician, and DJ. She is equally at home with Blues, jazz and gospel. Through poetry, she is unafraid to speak of the pain, the pride, the truth of living in troubled times. Avotcja is a member of DAMO (Disability Advocates Of Minorities Organization) & the National Writers Union Local #3. Modupue includes Tammy Hall on piano, Ranzel Merritt on drums, Baba Ken Okulolo on talking drum, Sandy Poindexter on violin, Val Serrant on steel drum and djembe, Eugene Warren on acoustic base and Francis Wong on tenor saxophone and flute. Warren on acoustic base and Francis Wong on tenor saxophone and flute.

Carl Winters Quintet Carl Winters is a San Francisco-based musician called "The Kalimba King," due to his expertise on the kalimba (African thumb piano). Winters performs locally, nationally and internationally expounding the virtues of this often misunderstood and misinterpreted instrument. He has been inspired to develop an extensive songbook with the kalimba. His repertoire includes gospel, jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, pop, and original songs. He will be backed by Robert Collier on keyboards, David Hardiman on trumpet, Kamau on drums, a bass player (TBA) and dancer Benita Barron.

UNITED IN HEALTH: Health Fair/Town Hall Meeting

When: Saturday, August 12, 2006, 11 am - 4 pm

Where: African American Art & Culture Complex, 762 Fulton, SF

Admission: FREE

Special: Food, prizes and raffle drawings

In collaboration with Supervisor Ross Mirkamimi and The African American Art and Culture Complex, **AfroSolo Arts Festival** will host a Health Fair and Town Hall Meeting. The objectives of the event are:

- Increase health awareness by providing health screenings, information and demonstrations
- Motivate participants to make positive health behavior changes
- Promote self-care practices
- Increase awareness of local health services and resources
- Provide access and interaction with health and medical professionals

Community Health Fair/Town Hall Meeting Schedule

11 am - 3 pm	Community Health Fair
12:30 - 2 pm	Panel Discussions
	A. Women's Issues - Buriel Clay Theater
	B. Men's Issues - Hall of Culture
	C. Youth Issues - NIA Room
2:30 pm - 4 pm	Town Hall Meeting - Buriel Clay Theater

Black Voices Series

When: Thursday, August 17 - Saturday, August 19, 8 pm, Sunday, August 20, 3 pm

Where: Buriel Clay Theatre, African American Art & Culture Complex, 762 Fulton, SF

Tickets: \$15 General; \$25 Gala Performance, reception & Tribute to Johnny Land, August 19.

Featuring: Dramatic soprano Jeannine Anderson, dancer Tarance "T" Artis and Paco Gomes, musician Jacqueline B. Hairston, theater artist Wayne Harris, and cartoonist Keith Knight.

In exploration of the Festival's theme of Black Health, we present six solo artists performing works related to health.

Jeannine Anderson - A Recital: Jeannine Anderson is an instructor and Program Administrative Assistant, at the esteemed Young Musicians Program (YMP) in Berkeley. She is also a graduate of YMP. While a student, Anderson studied with David Tigner. After graduation, she attended and received a Bachelor of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music. She then attended the Mannes College of Music. Anderson returned to the San Francisco Bay Area in 2003, where she sings and works. During the summer, she is the Artistic Director of YMP's Opera/Musical Theatre and teaches diction.

Tarance "T" Artis - Inside the Brain: Teenage dancer Artis, performs a piece exploring peace and violence, life and death, choices and decisions choreographed by Paco Gomes. It is a work about family love, loss and redemption. "T" is 17 years old and from Denver, Colorado. He has been dancing for seven years and has had the opportunity to train and perform with some of the world's top ballet,

modern, contemporary, jazz and lyrical teachers and choreographers. He will be attending Alonzo King Lines Ballet summer intensive in July on a full scholarship.

Paco Gomes - *Before and After Fifty*: Afro-Brazilian, Paco Gomes comes out of retirement to premiere *Before and After Fifty*, an exhilarating autobiographical work exploring the passage from youth to adulthood, admiration to love and good health to concern for others. It is a moving tribute to his grandfather. Gomes has studied folkloric and religious dances since his childhood in Bahia, Brazil and holds a degree in dance and a Masters in education from the Federal University in Bahia. In addition, he has been a guest faculty member at Stanford University. His Dance Company, *Paco Gomes and Dancers* founded in 2004, has performed in various venues in San Francisco and Bahia, Brazil.

Wayne Harris - *Mother's Milk*: Veteran AfroSolo artist returns with his loving, uplifting story about his visits home to take care of his mother. With humor, compassion and dignity, he performs the story of her battle with breast cancer. An up and coming Bay Area storyteller, Harris is currently at work on *The May Day Parade* in conjunction with director David Ford.

Jacqueline B. Hairston - *The Black Voice - A Healing Presence*: Hairston will take the audience on a healing musical journey based on sound, breath, and movement. She will use authentic associations from ancient cultures combined with musical tones emanating from the African-American experience that positively enhance the well-being of the body, mind, and spirit. Hairston is a professional pianist, multi-talented ASCAP composer/arranger and vocal coach. She is a noted authority on Black spirituals and has arranged spirituals for or written tributes to renowned singers such as Leontyne Price and Kathleen Battle.

Keith Knight - *Untitled*: Keith is an award-winning San Francisco-based cartoonist and rapper. His two weekly comic strips, the K Chronicles (seen on Salon.com) and (th)ink (currently seen in the San Francisco Chronicle's 96 Hours), offer an irreverent combination of race, politics, family and cutting-edge humor. His work has received praise from cartoonists Garry Trudeau (Doonesbury) and Aaron McGruder (the Boondocks), writers Adam Mansbach and Dave Eggers, among others.

Using his keen observation, insight, life experiences and cultural heritage, Knight will present a comic strip slideshow performance exploring health issues in the African American community. He will address these issues with wit, sensitivity, outrage and homage.

The Different Shades of Music: A Tribute to Johnny Land

When: Saturday, August 19, 7:30 pm to 8 pm

Where: Buriel Clay Theatre, African American Art & Culture Complex, 762 Fulton, SF.

Tickets: \$25 includes admission to the Gala AfroSolo **Black Voices** performance and reception (see above)

Featuring: Lawrence Beaman, Barbara Early, Curtis Reed, Lawrence Sumpter, and Al Yates of Jonal Productions

In collaboration with Jonal Productions, AfroSolo presents a pre-show tribute to the late musician, teacher, producer and mentor, Johnny Land.

Land was a retired music director at San Francisco's Lowell High School, where he inspired many students to pursue singing and performing long after graduation. He also worked as the musical director at San Francisco's Polytechnic High, where he taught Martha Wash, who later became half of the Weather Girls, best known for singing *It's Raining Men*. Also a singer and pianist, Land directed choirs, staged plays and musicals for over 30 years. He took his music groups around the world, recorded albums with them, and won several awards. Land was a Josephine Baker aficionado. He had a large collection of her music and memorabilia. He also opened a soul food restaurant named after her in the Inner Richmond in the early 1970s.

####