**AfroSolo’s Mission and History**

AfroSolo Theatre Company's mission is to nurture, promote, and present African American and African Diasporan art and culture through solo AfroSolo Theatre Company's mission to nurture, promote, and present African American and African Diasporan art and culture through solo theatre performances, visual and literary arts. Our programming seeks to illuminate the diverse range of styles, disciplines, and perspectives of Black artists using art to address issues of relevance to the Black community that empower and counteract negative stereotypes.

AfroSolo’s main programming is the annual AfroSolo Arts Festival consisting of solo theatre, dance, poetry and music performances over the course of a season. United by a theme, it consists of three primary events: 1) AfroSolo in the Gardens, a free jazz concert featuring up to three jazz vocalists and/or instrumentalists on Yerba Buena Gardens’ outdoor stage; 2) AfroSolo in the Gallery, a visual arts exhibit featuring up to five artists at the African American Center at SF’s Main Public Library or online on AfroSolo’s website; and 3) the Black Voices Performance Series, the festival’s main component is a series of weekend of performances by solo theater, spoken word, music and dance artists. AfroSolo also produces ongoing community engagement activities such as: 1) "Writing for Life," a series of theater and creative writing classes for formerly incarcerated men in partnership with Mentoring Men’s Movement culminating with on-stage performances; 2) Resilient Black Women, a writing workshop for Black Women in the Bayview Hunters Point of San Francisco; and 3) A Senior’s writing workshop at Dr. George Davis Senior Center in SF’s Bayview Hunters Point.

For over 30 years, the AfroSolo Theatre Company has featured more than 250+ solo performance and visual Black artists through its annual AfroSolo Arts Festival. The season-long festival is the main vehicle through which AfroSolo pursues its mission, providing a platform on which African American artists can express their experiences and foster dialogue about Black arts and culture and the social issues that fuel this work. Launched in 1993 by Founder Artistic/ Executive Director, **Thomas Robert Simpson**, the first festival was produced in 1994. By promoting the work of African Americans artists, Simpson serves as a connector and focal point for the Black community in SF through his extensive network of artists, collaborators, and community partners. He has developed strong partnerships within the African American community in a variety of ways. AfroSolo’s office has been maintained at the African American Art and Culture Complex (AAACC) in the historically Black neighborhood of the Western Addition and presented most program in AAACC’s Buriel Clay Theater until its closure due to COVID. AfroSolo continues to advocate for Black artists and provide opportunities for sustained investment in African American communities and underserved audiences especially in the SF Bay Area. also maintains collaborative partnerships with other Black led organization that serve and benefit the Black community at-large and is a member of the African American Theater Alliance (ATTAIN) that includes the African American Shakespeare Company, Cultural Odyssey, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, among others.

AfroSolo has presented such artists as the late actor Ruby Dee, singer and songwriter Charles Brown, comedian and activist Dick Gregory, and poet Professor June Jordan. We have presented the legendary Mavis Staples and more than 200 local artists, such as Paula West, Idris Ackamoor, Marcus Shelby, Destiny Muhammad, Malik Seneferu, and Laura Ellis.