

LAWRENCE HELMAN PUBLIC RELATIONS

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FOR PRESS MATERIALS, HI-RES COLOR PRESS PHOTOS, VISIT:

<https://afrosolo.org/electronic-press-kit-june-2025/>

TICKETS: In Person & Live Streaming options available.

<https://www.commonwealthclub.org/events/2025-06-16/afrosolo-arts-festival-we-come-far-music>

WEB SITE: <https://afrosolo.org>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100044743644987>

INSTAGRAM: <https://www.instagram.com/afrosolotheatrecompany/>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **June 3, 2025**

AfroSolo Theatre Company at The Commonwealth Club presents...

WE'VE COME THIS FAR BY MUSIC:

A Juneteenth Musical Spectacle Featuring:

Classical, Spirituals, Gospel, and Art Songs as part of San Francisco's Juneteenth Celebration

Featuring performers:

Dr. Carl Blake, Piano, Program Director

Bradley Kynard, Baritone

Shawnette Sulker, Soprano

William Underwood, Flutist

Mon., June 16, 2025 - 1 Performance Only!

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm (Doors 5:00 pm)

In Person & Live Streaming options available.

Commonwealth Club of San Francisco*

110 The Embarcadero (at Mission St.) San Francisco, CA 94105

**** Venue Accessibility Info.: The Commonwealth Club of SF and restrooms are ADA-accessible.***

To arrange an interview with Thomas Robert Simpson (founder and artistic director of AfroSolo), or Bradley Kynard, Shawnette Sulker, William Underwood, Dr. Carl Blake –

(performers appearing in AfroSolo's **WE'VE COME THIS FAR BY MUSIC: A Musical Spectacle**
Featuring: Classical, Spirituals, Gospel, and Art Songs,
please email or call publicist Lawrence Helman heytheresells@gmail.com 415-336-8220

TICKETS: In Person & Live Streaming options available.

Please pre-register to receive a link to the live-stream event.

<https://www.commonwealthclub.org/events/2025-06-16/afrosolo-arts-festival-we-come-far-music>

\$22.00 - In-Person General Admission Tickets

FREE - Student Tickets:

\$5.00 - Livestream Tickets:

FOR INFORMATION VISIT: <https://afrosolo.org> or call 415-771-2376

Featuring performers:

Dr. Carl Blake, Piano, Program Director

Bradley Kynard, Baritone

Shawnette Sulker, Soprano

William Underwood, Flutist

AfroSolo Theatre Company at The Commonwealth Club presents... WE'VE COME THIS FAR BY MUSIC: A Musical Spectacle Featuring: Classical, Spirituals, Gospel, and Art Songs, as part of San Francisco's Juneteenth Celebration - featuring African American performers including:

DR. CARL BLAKE (Piano and Program Director) holds three degrees in piano performance: Bachelor of Music (magna cum laude) from Boston University, Master of Arts from San Jose State University, and Doctor of Musical Arts from Cornell University. Dr. Blake has performed to critical acclaim three times in Weill Recital Hall (formerly, Carnegie Recital Hall), Wigmore Hall (London) and L'Hermitage (Winter Palace of the Czars, St. Petersburg, Russia). In addition, he has toured in France, England, Central and South America, and the Caribbean Islands as Artistic Ambassador for the US Department of State. Currently, he serves as Director of Music of The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples in SF. Mr. Blake serves on the Board of Directors for [Noontime Concerts SF](#).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzP7Sjeiegw> (36:30 – 40:26 Min)

BRADLEY KYNARD (Baritone) appeared in two operatic premieres this season: *The Emissary* composed by *Oh/Rourke* and *Prospero's Island* by Shearer/Stevens. He also sang the role of Zebul in *Jeptha* by Handel, the bass soloist in *Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet* (BWV 212) by J.S. Bach and filmed the cinematic version of the new opera *A Little Girl Dreams of Taking the Veil* by Wold. Past performances include *Sophia's Forest* by Beecher/Moscovitch and *Harriet's Spirit* by Shelby/Olvera with Opera Parallèle, *Hiob* by Mendelssohn, *Ballad of the Brown King* by Bonds with Ukiah Symphony Orchestra and the role of Dagoo in *Moby Dick* by Heggie/Scheer

with SF Opera. He performed baritone solos in *Carmina Burana* by Orff with Golden Gate Symphony and sang the role of Brooke (*Little Women*) by Adamo with Island City Opera.

SHAWNETTE SULKER (Guyanese American Soprano) has been praised for her “heart-breaking poignancy” and “enchanted vocal splendor” by critics in the U.S. and Europe. Ms. Sulker has performed with many notable opera companies and symphony orchestras throughout the U.S.A. Her international credits include performances in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, The Czech Republic, Japan, and New Zealand. A consummate performer, Shawnette is equally at home performing standard repertoire as she is in newer contemporary works. A featured artist with SF Opera, she has performed roles including Poppea, Die Königin der Nacht, Cleopatra, and Clara in *Porgy and Bess*. Known for her versatility, Sulker creates roles in contemporary operas such as Mary Jane Bowser in Jake Heggie’s *Intelligence* and Ariel in Allen Shearer’s *Prospero’s Island*. She has sung in American premieres by Gorb, O’Regan, Carlone, and Perry. On the concert stage, she has appeared at Teatro di San Carlo, Lincoln Center, and Leipzig’s Gewandhaus. Her repertoire includes *Carmina Burana*, *Messiah*, and Mahler’s Symphonies. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEFIh4_h9Ho

WILLIAM UNDERWOOD III (Flute) performs in traditional, avant-garde, social and sacred arenas. He holds the Bachelor of Science in Music and Master of Music in Flute Performance degrees at Florida A&M University and Wayne State University, respectively. Among AfroSolo artists, William is a veteran and has toured Japan extensively with Kyoto Tokyo Incorporated. Mr. Underwood works regularly as a solo, collaborative and recording flutist. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1bPzHQR1Ok>

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Thomas Robert Simpson, founder and artistic director of AfroSolo says:

“We celebrate our third anniversary of collaboration with the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco with joy and excitement. We are showcasing a cast of classically-trained artists presenting a joyful, soul-stirring program based on African American experiences. This theme fits perfectly with its presentation as part of San Francisco's Juneteenth Celebration. A celebration that commemorates the freeing of enslaved people in Texas two years after the

Emancipation Proclamation. We cordially invite you to experience this uplifting program by the AfroSolo Theatre Company, a haven for Black Arts, Culture, Intellect, and Entertainment!”

FOR INFORMATION VISIT: <https://afrosolo.org> or call 415-771-2376

ABOUT AfroSolo Theatre Company <https://afrosolo.org>

AfroSolo Theatre Company’s mission is to nurture, promote and present African American and African Diasporan art and culture through solo performances and the visual and literary arts. Since 1994, we have presented the annual AfroSolo Arts Festival, a forum for African Americans and the larger African Diaspora as a way to give voice to the unique experience of being Black. Through art, we bring people of all ethnicities together to explore and share the human spirit that binds us all.

AfroSolo Arts Festival is made possible through the support of the CA Arts Council, Grants for the Arts, Dream Keeper Initiative, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, SF Arts Commission, and The Friends of AfroSolo,

AfroSolo's collaborative partners include AATAIN, Cultural Odyssey, Intersection for the Arts, Play Ground Theatre, The African American Art and Culture Complex, The Flow Fund, The Dr. George W. Davis Senior Center and the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival.

AFROSOLO’S HISTORY AND MISSION <https://afrosolo.org>

CALENDAR LISTINGS

WHAT:

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WHO:

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