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**SAN FRANCISCO'S AFROSOLO THEATRE COMPANY
CELEBRATES 24TH SEASON WITH BLACK VOICES
PERFORMANCE SERIES: "OUR VOICES, OUR LIVES"**

~ Oct 18-21 / Buriel Clay Theatre ~

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, CA: San Francisco's AfroSolo Theatre Company excitedly announced today its 24th anniversary season with its annual AfroSolo Arts Festival." Titled "Black Voices Performance Series: Our Voices, Our Lives," live performances take place October 18 -21, 2018, hosted by the Buriel Clay Theatre in the African American Art and Culture Complex, 762 Fulton Street, San Francisco. General Admission is \$20, Seniors (65+) and youth (18 and under) \$15

The AfroSolo Theatre Company continues to be a shining beacon of culture in San Francisco's African American community by presenting the 24th annual performing arts season. Two programs will be presented.

PROGRAM 1: "Courage Under Fire: The Story of Elroy" is performed by AfroSolo founder and artistic director Thomas Robert Simpson on Thursday, October 18, 2018 at 8 p.m. "Courage Under Fire" is a story about family, race, politics, and redemption. It explores the life of Elroy Simpson, AfroSolo founder Thomas Roberts Simpson's father. Elroy committed a simple, everyday act that would become revolutionary.

PROGRAM 2: The "Our Stories, Our Lives!" performances will be presented from October 19 through October 21, 2018. Theme: "Our Day Has Come." Each performance will include five Bay Area performers including Nina Causey, Marshall Jarreau, Ayodele Nzinga, Kathryn Seabron and Thomas Robert Simpson. General Admission is \$20; seniors and students \$15.

ALSO Saturday, October 20th:

6:00 p.m. Gala Reception

\$35 General Admission, \$30 Senior (65 +) and youth (18 and under).

Includes light buffet, wine, soft drinks and reserved seats for 8 p.m. performance.

8 p.m. Performance Only: General Admission is \$20, Seniors (65+), youth (18 and under) \$15

"Our Stories, Our Lives" Performers

Nina Causey performs Dr. Mona Vaughn's "Horne to Horn," an enigmatic love story between Lena Horne and genius jazz composer, pianist, lyricist, and arranger Billy Strayhorn, mentored by Duke Ellington. After Strayhorn declined Lena Horns' marriage proposal, they became best friends, sharing unconditional love. The pair traveled throughout the United States and the world, especially to Paris, sharing their music. They were also soldiers in the Civil Rights Movement, providing performances, funds and engaged in strategy sessions with Dr. Martin Luther King. Directed by Sean Vaughn. Music accompaniment by Max Perkoff.

Causey is an award-winning musician with numerous awards as a vocalist; she has also performed as a solo pianist. Causey has won numerous awards locally and nationally, including five BMA Awards. Nina is a seasoned jazz, blues, and neo-soul vocalist. She has graced the stage in such memorable roles as Lena Horne in "Horne to Strayhorn," "Cabin in the Sky," and "The Cotton Club Revue." She has also performed as Dorothy Dandridge in the starring role as "Carmen Jones" and Billie Holiday in the starring role of "Lady Sings the Blues."

Marshal Jarreau, who performs "This Little Light," which chronicles the depths and heights of Jarreau's life as he explores the space in between spirituality/sexuality, masculinity/ femininity, and white/black. Told entirely through words, music, dance, and video, Jarreau created "This Little Light" to inspire those who have ever felt shame or guilt because of their identity and for those who don't yet believe that 'it can get better.'

Jarreau is a professional dancer, circus aerialist, and certified massage therapist. He began his dance training in the BFA dance program at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2001. From Colorado, he began performing around the world with Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines and was also a top finalist on the first season of FOX's "So You Think You Can Dance." He also performed in Cirque Du Soleil's LOVE. Marshall has continued to perform with companies across the country, including Topsy Turvy Queer Circus in San Francisco and MOTH Contemporary Circus in Denver.

Ayodele Nzinga performs "Glory," the story of one North American African's woman's journey to claiming her destiny. It's about a thrown away child who knew at an early age that she had a purpose. "Glory" attempts to capture how personal narrative inhabits a family line and is edited over time, recasting meaning and the present moment. It looks at how that narrative is carried by the many selves that inform the whole of an individual. The work is curious about normative "fractures in self" and how these multiple selves may or may not contribute to the individual's thriving. So with a basket filled with sugar and ample salt, "Glory" charts the journey from thrown away to reaping the blessings in her destiny.

Nzinga is the award-winning founder and producing director of Oakland's oldest North American African Theater Company, the Lower Bottom Playaz. She is the only director in the world to have staged the complete works of the August Wilson Century Cycle in chronological order. The multi-disciplined artist Nzinga is often called a renaissance woman. Ishmael Reed calls her tour de force. The late Piri Thomas, and Black Arts impresario Marvin X, both describe her as "the best of us." Nzinga is currently producing BAMBDFEST a month-long arts and culture festival in Oakland's, Black Arts Movement Business District, February of 2019.

~ more ~

Kathryn Seabron performs excerpts from "Angry Black Woman." We are living in a "post-racial" society where "all lives matter. Actually, Black women are fighting for their humanity. They are demanding to be seen, heard, valued, and respected. Activist and raconteur Seabron has a tale to tell. She is the quintessential angry Black woman who has created a show that chronicles misogyny, the patented hatred of Black women that has made Seabron annoyed and exasperated to shed light on the racism and sexism that infects her daily life.

Thomas Robert Simpson performs "San Francisco, Open Your Golden Gate, a true story in the day in the life of Simpson. Through drama, comedy, and media, Simpson weaves a stirring story of a specific day. The day consists of leading a community health fair, a jazz/rock concert, a walk through San Francisco, and an unbelievable racial encounter. The day also includes sailboat racing, a famous comedy team, and a live concert.

Simpson is a writer, producer, performer, photographer, and founder and artistic director of the award-winning AfroSolo Arts Festival.

About AFROSOLO Arts Festival:

Twenty-four years have passed since the beginning of the first AfroSolo Arts Festival. During that time, AfroSolo Theatre Company has presented hundreds of artists, hosted numerous events, and attracted thousands to the Company's productions. AFROSOLO Arts Festivals have garnered rave reviews, received recognition from city, state and national leaders, and won the heart and souls of its audiences. The Company' staff and performers are grateful for all who have recognized and supported their efforts.

ABOUT AFROSOLO Theatre Company:

AfroSolo Theatre Company's mission is to nurture, promote, and present African American and African Diaspora art and culture through solo performances and the visual arts. Since 1993, the Company has provided a forum to give an authentic voice to the diverse experiences of Black people in the Americas. Through art, people of different ethnicities are brought together to explore and share the human spirit that binds.

Funding for the AfroSolo Theatre Company is made possible in part through the support of the California Arts Commission, Friends of AfroSolo, San Francisco Arts Commission, San Francisco Grants for the Arts, and the Zellerbach Family Foundation.

For more information, visit afrosolo.org, email thomas@afrosolo.org, or call (415) 771-2376.

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