

San Francisco Black Film Festival Turns Ten
Theme of "10 Years, 10 Days, 100 Films" Honors Milestone Year
Website Live May 20, Purchase tickets and view trailers

San Francisco, California – May 15, 2008 – the San Francisco Black Film Festival (SFBFF) celebrates its ten year anniversary from June 4-8 and June 11-15, 2008. Befitting its milestone status, the theme of this year's festival is "10 Years, 10 Days, 100 Films" as the SFBFF spans the globe with works from Africa, Australia, Canada, Europe and the United States. Festival venues include the former Social Security office at 1402 Fillmore Street, *1300 on Fillmore* at 1300 Fillmore Street, the *African American Arts and Culture Complex* at 762 Fulton Street, the *Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD)* at 685 Mission Street, *Rasselas Jazz Club* at 1534 Fillmore Street, the *Sundance Cinemas* at 1881 Post Street and *Yoshi's* at 1330 Fillmore Street. A separate but related event, the Urban Kidz Film Festival (UKFF), runs May 31 at the *Museum of the African Diaspora* with films, activities and hands-on workshops designed to spark the imaginations of the 5-12 year old set.

Long before "going global" became a catch phrase, the San Francisco Black Film Festival served as a bridge between worlds, forging cultural connections by presenting universal themes from filmmakers around the globe. The SFBFF has been a driving force integrating the work of independent Black filmmakers into the mainstream and illuminating the depth and diversity of the African-American experience.

"I'm proud that despite continual challenges and limited finances, the San Francisco Black Film Festival has become a force to be reckoned with", says SFBFF founder and executive director Ave Montague. "When I launched it in 1998, the SFBFF was a one-day event that played to an audience of a few hundred and barely caused a blip on the film industry's radar screen. Now it's a ten-day cultural celebration drawing international attention and thousands of attendees. I'm particularly excited about bringing the festival back to the Fillmore. Yoshi's, 1300 on Fillmore, the Fillmore Center, Starbucks and Rasselas have been very supportive."

Opening night kicks off on Wednesday, June 4th with **Shoot the Messenger**, a funny and irreverent work from Nigerian-born British filmmaker Ngozi Onwurah about a Black British teacher who fights his way out of madness and stops blaming his own people only after losing his job. The opening night festivities continue after the film at Rasselas Jazz Club on Fillmore. An exciting array of films will be presented throughout the festival's two week run. Works by African directors include **Footsteps in Africa**, an exploration of the daily life and ritualistic survival of the Tuareg/Kel Tamashek tribe in the Saharan desert of Mali and **After 9**, the story of a successful but closeted South African man who lives straight during the day but gay after nine.

Documentary highlights include **TRIBUTE: Stanley Tookie Williams, 1953-2005**, a provocative look at death row prisoner, Crips gang co-founder, children's book author and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Stanley Tookie Williams, **The People's Advocate: the Life and Times of Charles R. Garry**, which recounts the life of one of the most influential criminal defense attorneys of the twentieth century and the political revolutionaries (such as Huey Newton and Bobby Seale) he defended, and **Adjust Your Color: The Truth of Petey Greene**, the heroic tale of America's first shock-jock, who overcame poverty, drug addiction and a prison sentence by "telling it like it is" on his raw, uncensored radio and television programs. Don Cheadle (who played Greene in the feature *Talk To Me*), narrates and Howard Stern makes a cameo appearance.

Standouts in the documentary category continue with **Don't Hate Strippers: Fight The Government**, an account of male exotic dancers fighting local government in federal court over a new strip club law, **Nobody Knows: the Untold Story of the Black Mormons**, which traces the history and development of race issues in the Latter Day Saints church, and **Filmo**, a look at the current processes of gentrification and redevelopment within the once thriving area of the Western Addition. Other offerings include **Music Is My Life - Politics My Mistress - The Story of Oscar Brown**, a powerful and gripping portrait of the remarkable poet, singer, playwright, composer and social activist, and **Black August**, a docudrama that chronicles the short life of political prisoner George Lester Jackson (played by Gary Dourdan, CSI) and details how he became a flashpoint for revolution and ignited the bloodiest riot in San Quentin's history.

Feature films include **A Good Day to be Black and Sexy**, a raunchy between-the-sheets peek at black love and sexuality, **Kings of the Evening** (with Tyson Beckford), which reveals how a group of ghetto men transcend their bleak urban life every Sunday night, **Panman Rhythm of the Palms**, the story of the rise and fall of steel drum pan player Harry Daniel, **Sarbane's Oxley**, which examines the issue of accountability in both professional and personal settings, and **Something Is Killing Tate**, a tale of demons and the struggle for redemption. Presentations in the "Short" category include **FAL**, an account of automatic assault rifles and tragic loss, **Hollywood Jerome**, the story of a 14-year old who is enthralled and bamboozled by pop-culture depictions of gang culture, and **Spin**, which explores the issue of artistic integrity.

Of particular note this year is the San Francisco Black Film Festival retrospective and tribute to documentary filmmaker St. Clair Bourne (1943-2007), who died last December. During his 36-year career, Bourne made more than 40 films and provided a priceless record of American Black culture. His subjects included singer, actor and activist Paul Robeson, poet, novelist and playwright Langston Hughes, photojournalist and filmmaker Gordon Parks and poet/activist Amiri Baraka. A special program of Bourne's work will be shown, including "Making *Do the Right Thing*", "The Black and the Green" and "John Henrik Clarke: A Great and Mighty Walk". A panel discussion with noted Bay Area documentary filmmakers will follow.

Special events include the star-studded Melvin Van Peebles awards brunch on Saturday, June 14 at *1300 on Fillmore*. Actress Taraji P. Henson will receive the first-ever Phoenix Award in honor of her swift rise to stardom. Henson is best known for her role as pregnant prostitute Shug in Craig Brewer's "Hustle and Flow", where she made her singing debut and furnished the vocals for the Three 6 Mafia track "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp". She has also appeared in the films "Baby Boy", "Hairshow" and "Four Brothers", and currently plays attorney Whitney Rome on ABC's "Boston Legal". In her most recent work, Henson costars opposite Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett in Paramount's **The Curious Case of Benjamin Button**, scheduled for release on November 26, 2008.

About the San Francisco Black Film Festival (SFBFF)

From its modest beginnings in 1998 with only \$3,000 in funding, the San Francisco Black Film Festival (SFBFF) has grown from a one-day event with an audience of 300 to a ten-day cultural celebration drawing thousands of attendees. Under the leadership of founder and executive director Ave Montague, the SFBFF is managed by a dedicated advisory board of fifteen award-winning filmmakers, artists and business professionals including literary icon Ishmael Reed, actor/director Kevin Epps, producer/director Michael Schultz and actors Adam Davidson, Avon Kirkland and Terri J. Vaughn.

Presenting an array of work from Africa, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Europe and the United States, the San Francisco Black Film Festival has been a driving force integrating the work of independent Black directors into the mainstream, illuminating the depth and diversity of the African-American experience. The SFBFF is now an established forum for the cinematic community and draws a vibrant mix of veteran filmmakers, emerging artists, celebrities, critics and film fans from around the world.

The tenth annual San Francisco Black Film Festival runs June 4 through 8 and June 11 through 15 at the former Social Security office at 1402 Fillmore Street, 1300 on Fillmore at 1300 Fillmore Street, the African American Arts and Culture Complex at 762 Fulton Street, the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) at 685 Mission Street, Rasselas Jazz Club at 1534 Fillmore Street, the Sundance Cinemas at 1881 Post Street and Yoshi's at 1330 Fillmore Street. Tickets may be purchased online at www.brownpapertickets.com or <http://www.sfbff.org>. For a complete schedule of San Francisco Black Film Festival screenings, panels, parties and events, visit <http://www.sfbff.org> after May 20 or call the SFBFF hotline at (415) 771-9271.

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