

An Excerpt of the Historical Journey of Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre and Black International Cinema Berlin 2025 - 1986

Welcome to Good Will, Black History 2026 and Future Centuries, Donald Muldrow Griffith and the everlasting support of ALEX - Open Channel Berlin, Checkpoint Charlie Foundation, Rathaus Schöneberg, the friendly and dependable U.S. Army accompanied by many individuals, grounded in conscientious effort and constructive idealism.

We are pleased to recognize the many support times of these persons and the organizations with whom they are or were associated.

2025

40th Black International Cinema Berlin 2025 Anniversary Production

Theme: PEACE! NOW! ALWAYS! PLEASE!

The Black International Cinema Berlin 2025 celebrated its 40th edition – a remarkable milestone for a festival internationally recognized for its longstanding commitment to intercultural dialogue, social awareness and artistic diversity.

Produced and directed by Prof. Donald Muldrow Griffith / Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre, in association with The Collegium - Forum & Television Program Berlin, "Footprints in the Sand?" ExhibitionBerlin and Cultural Zephyr e.V., the festival presented from November 21-23, 2025 at Marlene-Dietrich-Kinosaal at Rathaus Schöneberg Berlin a diverse program of films, art, music, and discussions centered on peace, humanity and mutual understanding.

Additionally, the film program was presented from December 4-8 and 25-29, 2025 at ALEX - Open Channel Berlin via television and livestream.

Taking place within the framework of CrossKultur 2025 and in cooperation with ALEX - Open Channel Berlin, the Black International Cinema Berlin continues its longstanding non-profit commitment to fostering respect, inclusion and creativity.

With its theme **Peace! Now! Always! Please!**, the festival calls for empathy, awareness, and peace – values essential in today's challenging times.

The 40th anniversary invites audiences, artists and filmmakers to celebrate together, reflect, and engage with new and constructive perspectives.

Black International Cinema Berlin 2025 – a space for encounter, inspiration, and hope.

For more information please visit our website at
<https://black-international-cinema.com/BIC25/>

1990

The Historical Founding of Black History Month in Berlin Germany and Europe in 1990, was by the U.S. Army, Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre, Black International Cinema Berlin and Airport Tempelhof, Berlin.

Black History Month in Berlin, Germany, and Europe was historically established through efforts initiated by Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre, Black International Cinema Berlin, and supported by the U.S. Army and Airport Tempelhof in 1990.

Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre and "Space & Times" were invited by the U.S. Army to produce and perform a dance and photography program in celebration of Black History Month in February 1990 at Tempelhof Airport in Berlin. "Space & Times" presented a live performance, and the accompanying photographic exhibition featured works by Lester Sloan of *Newsweek* magazine and Robert Golightly Jr. of the U.S. Army.

"Space & Times" and "Crossroads"

The dance company "Space & Times" was created and directed by Donald Muldrow Griffith and Gayle McKinney Griffith of Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre in 1987 in Berlin, Germany, and consisted of young people 15-22 years of age from various cultural origins and socioeconomic backgrounds. "Space & Times" focused on the entry- to intermediate-level dancer. Creating original choreographies which were presented for the first time in Berlin in such landmark theatres as the Hebbel-Theater, the PUMPE (Youth Culture Center) and the Akademie der Künste (Academy of the Arts).

In October of 1989, Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre produced, directed and staged two dance cultural evenings, entitled "Crossroads", with "Space & Times", Nana Shineflug and "The Chicago Moving Company", Chicago ILL., USA and various other Berlin artists at the Hebbel Theater in Berlin. Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre was awarded a special proclamation by the Mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley.

Donald Muldrow Griffith awarded "Special Judge's Award" by the U.S. Army

In 1988, Donald Muldrow Griffith directed, revised and re-choreographed Ntosake Shange's choreo-poem "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf". The company (Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre) performed the work at the Amerika Haus and the Berlin Community Theatre from October until December 1988. In contrast to the original, at the conclusion of the revised version, Black women and men became closer in their struggle to create a better relationship with one another in a historically difficult societal setting. Donald Muldrow Griffith was awarded the "Special Judge's Award" for best choreography in the European-wide tournament of plays by the U.S. Army for his unique creations.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

RICHARD M. DALEY
MAYOR

P R O C L A M A T I O N

WHEREAS, the Chicago Moving Company, Chicago's oldest existing modern dance group, is performing and teaching October 28 - November 5, in Berlin, West Germany; and

WHEREAS, Gayle McKinney Griffith and Donald M. Griffith have thus promoted cultural exchange between the great cities of West Berlin and Chicago, and have enhanced the cultural lives of their citizenry; and

WHEREAS, the city of West Berlin, the Mayor of West Berlin, Gayle McKinney Griffith and Donald M. Griffith have graciously welcomed and hosted Chicago artists:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Richard M. Daley, Mayor of the City of Chicago, do hereby proclaim November 13, 1989, to be WEST BERLIN APPRECIATION DAY IN CHICAGO, and furthermore proclaim Donald M. Griffith, Gayle McKinney Griffith, the Mayor of Berlin, and the citizens of Berlin to be honorary citizens of Chicago, in recognition of the cultural exchange between our great cities.

Dated this 20th day of October, 1989.

Richard M. Daley
Mayor

FEUILLETON BERLINER MORGENPOST

SONNTAG, 27. NOVEMBER 1988



Amerika-Haus: Frauenschicksale in den Farben des Regenbogens

Am 2. und am 5. Dezember ist der preisgekrönte Off-Broadway-Erfolg mit dem Bandwurmtitle „For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suic-

de When The Rainbow Is Enuf“ von Ntozake Shange im Amerika-Haus in der Hardenbergstraße 22-24 zu erleben. Donald Griffith vom

Berliner Fountainhead Tanztheater hat das Prosa-Gedicht-Drama mit seinem Ensemble inszeniert. Beginn: jeweils 20 Uhr. Foto: Colightly

* See translation page 27



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

AEBA-GA-C-RD

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. COMMAND, BERLIN, and U.S. ARMY, BERLIN
APO NEW YORK 09742-5003

6 May 1988



SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation

THRU: Elizabeth A. Welsh, Chief, Entertainment Branch *EW*

TO: Donald Griffith

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for your outstanding support of the CRD sponsored event "The Black Experience" held on 26 February 1988, in commemoration of Black History.

During the period 2 January to 26 February 1988, you were assigned as co-director for this event and you assumed this responsibility in a highly effective manner. Your skills and expertise were clearly demonstrated by the great success of the program. Your presence during the rehearsals was an asset to the participants in the show; it was through your direction and advice that their skills and talent became known.

It is a rare occasion to work with someone of your professional caliber and experience. Thank you for your invaluable assistance in this worthwhile effort.

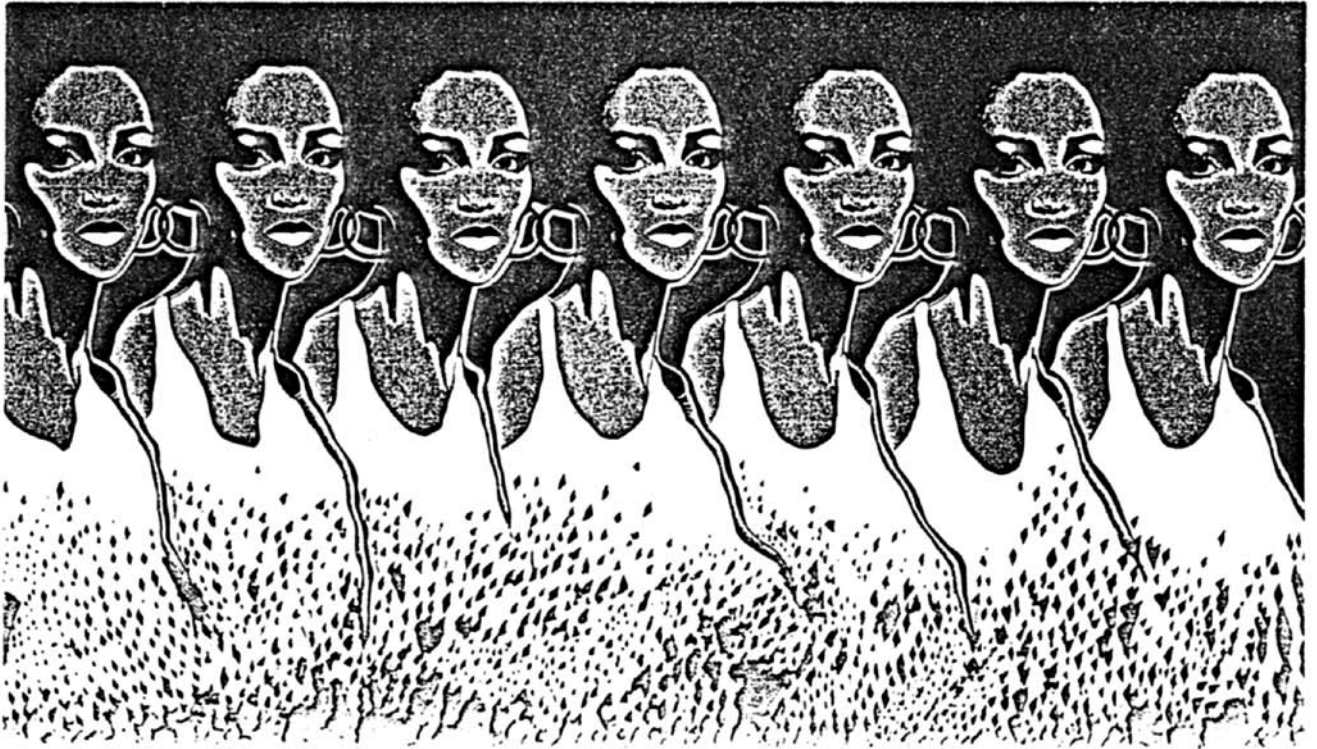
Lois D. Parker
LORENCE D. PARKER
Chief, CRD



FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE

WHEN THE RAINBOW IS ENUF

A CHOREO POEM BY NTOZAKE SHANGE



DIRECTED BY DONALD M. GRIFFITH

ENTERTAINMENT BR COMMUNITY REC DIV DPCA

Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre, 1988

* Feuilleton | Berliner Morgenpost | Sunday, November 27, 1988

Amerika-Haus: Women's destinies in the colors of the rainbow

On December 2 and 5, the award-winning Off-Broadway success with the extra long title "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Enuf" by Ntozake Shange can be seen at the Amerika-Haus at Hardenbergstraße 22-24. Donald Griffith of the Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre has staged the prose-poem drama with his ensemble. Start: 8 p.m. on each occasion. Photo: Golightly

The Chicago Moving Company
of
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

presents this
Certificate of Appreciation to
Gayle McKinney Griffith
in recognition of outstanding contributions
in the field of dance

Nana Shindflug
Nana Shindflug, Director

Dennis Wise
Dennis Wise, Manager

October 28, 1989



The Chicago Moving Company
of
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

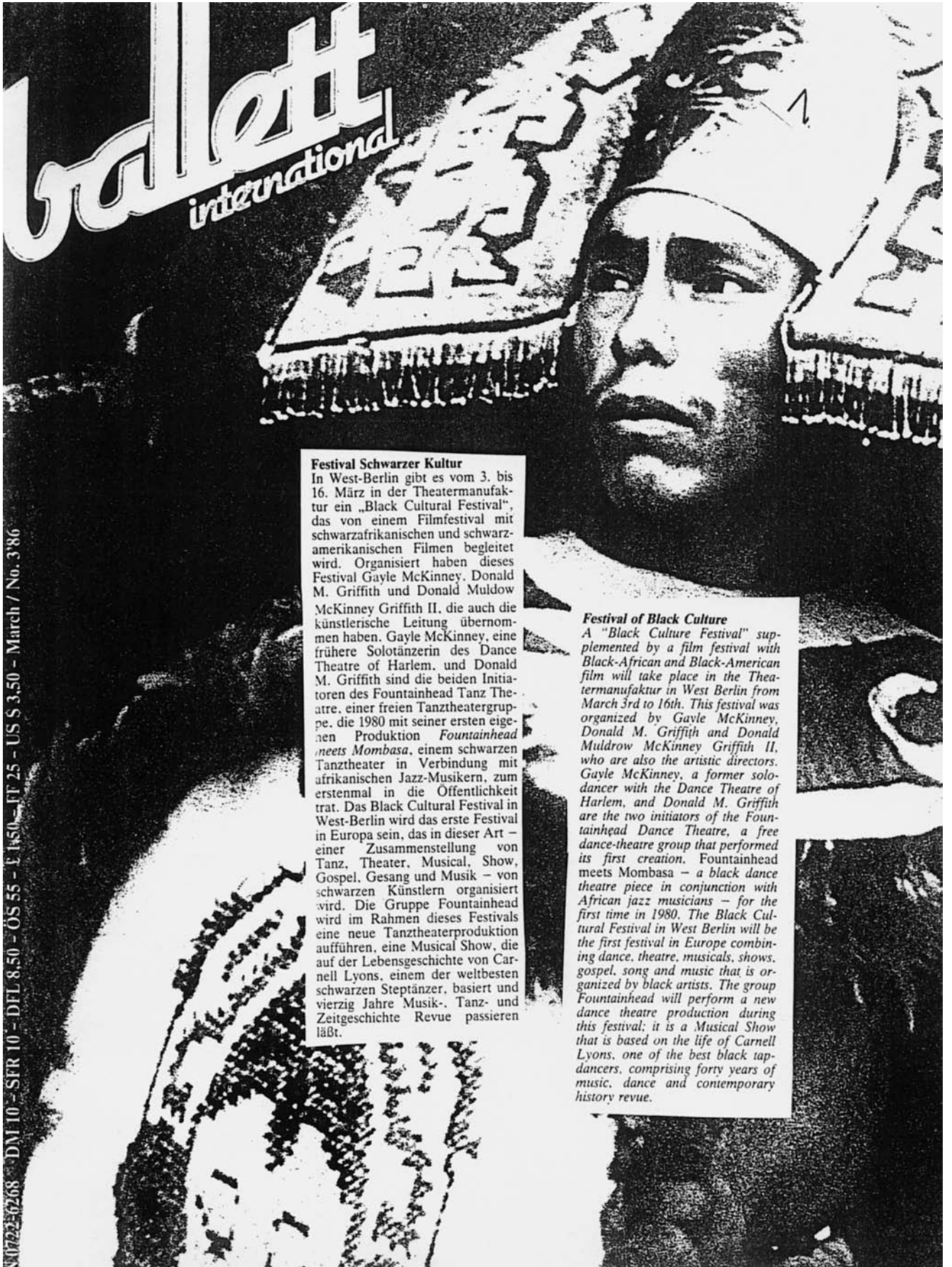
presents this
Certificate of Appreciation to
Donald M. Griffith
for promoting world unity through
International Artistic Presentations

Nana Shindflug
Nana Shindflug, Director

Dennis Wise
Dennis Wise, Manager

October 28, 1989





DM 10 - SER 10 - DFL 8,50 - ÖS 55 - £ 150 - FF 25 - US \$ 3,50 - March / No. 3'86

Festival Schwarzer Kultur

In West-Berlin gibt es vom 3. bis 16. März in der Theatermanufaktur ein „Black Cultural Festival“, das von einem Filmfestival mit schwarzafrikanischen und schwarz-amerikanischen Filmen begleitet wird. Organisiert haben dieses Festival Gayle McKinney, Donald M. Griffith und Donald Muldow McKinney Griffith II, die auch die künstlerische Leitung übernommen haben. Gayle McKinney, eine frühere Solotänzerin des Dance Theatre of Harlem, und Donald M. Griffith sind die beiden Initiatoren des Fountainhead Tanz Theatre, einer freien Tanztheatergruppe, die 1980 mit seiner ersten eigenen Produktion *Fountainhead meets Mombasa*, einem schwarzen Tanztheater in Verbindung mit afrikanischen Jazz-Musikern, zum erstenmal in die Öffentlichkeit trat. Das Black Cultural Festival in West-Berlin wird das erste Festival in Europa sein, das in dieser Art – einer Zusammenstellung von Tanz, Theater, Musical, Show, Gospel, Gesang und Musik – von schwarzen Künstlern organisiert wird. Die Gruppe Fountainhead wird im Rahmen dieses Festivals eine neue Tanztheaterproduktion aufführen, eine Musical Show, die auf der Lebensgeschichte von Carnell Lyons, einem der weltbesten schwarzen Steptänzer, basiert und vierzig Jahre Musik-, Tanz- und Zeitgeschichte Revue passieren läßt.

Festival of Black Culture

A „Black Culture Festival“ supplemented by a film festival with Black-African and Black-American film will take place in the Theatermanufaktur in West Berlin from March 3rd to 16th. This festival was organized by Gayle McKinney, Donald M. Griffith and Donald Muldow McKinney Griffith II, who are also the artistic directors. Gayle McKinney, a former solo-dancer with the Dance Theatre of Harlem, and Donald M. Griffith are the two initiators of the Fountainhead Dance Theatre, a free dance-theatre group that performed its first creation, *Fountainhead meets Mombasa* – a black dance theatre piece in conjunction with African jazz musicians – for the first time in 1980. The Black Cultural Festival in West Berlin will be the first festival in Europe combining dance, theatre, musicals, shows, gospel, song and music that is organized by black artists. The group Fountainhead will perform a new dance theatre production during this festival; it is a Musical Show that is based on the life of Carnell Lyons, one of the best black tap-dancers, comprising forty years of music, dance and contemporary history revue.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Dr. Carter G. Woodson

A Classic in Black

Historian

Born 1875 - Died 1950

A pioneer in the intellectual history of the Black American.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF NEGRO (Now: African American) LIFE AND HISTORY (ASALH)

The Association, located at 1538 Ninth Street N.W., was long the sole professional agency concerned with preserving the historical record of Black people in American life. The organizing pioneer behind the Association was Carter Woodson, a scholar and lecturer who began publication of the *Journal of Negro History* in 1916. Ten years later, Woodson inaugurated observance of "Negro History Week," during which leaders of the Black freedom struggle were appropriately honored, primarily in schools. Negro History Week, Black History Month, is always celebrated in February, as close as possible to the birthdays of both Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

Many of Woodson's books have become the foundations upon which more contemporary historians have based their research. These include *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (1915), *A Century of Negro Migration* (1918), *The History of the Negro Church* (1921), *The Negro in Our History* (1922), *The Rural Negro* (1930) and *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933).

Dr. Carter G. Woodson died in Washington, D.C. on April 3, 1950.

1986

Historic Black Cultural Festival, West Berlin, Germany

The Black International Cinema Berlin has its origins in West Berlin in 1986. At that time, Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre produced and directed Europe's first Historic, three-week Black Cultural Festival. Founded and produced by Prof. Donald Muldrow Griffith, the festival emerged in response to social challenges and was created to provide space for the voices, perspectives and experiences of Black individuals and communities that were often overlooked in public discourse.

Originally conceived as an interdisciplinary cultural event and a forum for film art, exchange, and artistic diversity, the festival remains interdisciplinary and intercultural today, fostering dialogue among different communities, forms of expression and lived experiences. At the same time, it serves as a platform for transnational cultural diplomacy, rooted in encounter, attentive listening and mutual respect.

Through the ongoing work of its team – grounded in idealism, commitment and a strong sense of responsibility – the Black International Cinema Berlin has become an established and enduring part of Berlin's cultural landscape, continuing to embody its guiding principle: Art as a bridge, encounter as the foundation.

"...Art and culture can build bridges, cross borders and pull away from stereotypical categorized thinking. Therefore, initiatives such as Black International Cinema Berlin are important for the capital of Germany.

I extend my congratulations to the organizers of Black International Cinema Berlin, a cultural highlight which is unique Germany-wide..."

Gabriele Gün Tank (2010), Commissioner for Integration, District Tempelhof-Schöneberg, Berlin/Germany

Thank you and Many Blessings to All!
Always and Forever!

**PEACE!
NOW!
ALWAYS!
PLEASE!**

Mottos:

"I may not make it if I try, but I damn sure won't if I don't..." - Oscar Brown Jr.

"Mankind will either find a way or make one." - C.P. Snow

"Whatever you do..., be cool!" - Joseph Louis Turner

"Yes, I can...!" - Sammy Davis Jr.

"Yes, We can...!" - Barack Hussein Obama

"Yes, we can and Yes, we better...!" - Barack Hussein Obama and Donald Muldrow Griffith

Research and Text: Prof. Donald Muldrow Griffith

Founder/Producer/Director/Publisher/Curator/Film & TV Director/Moderator/Author/Choreographer
Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre/Black International Cinema Berlin/THE COLLEGIUM - Forum & Television
Program Berlin/"Footprints in the Sand?" ExhibitionBerlin/Cultural Zephyr e.V.

Berlin, Germany, February 12, 2026

**LEARN, LIVE, LOVE, PROGRESS,
Always and Together!**



Tom Brady

Tapped out toes pose.



Tom Brady

Zakaria Hassen and Roland Wendler rehearse a number for the tribute to Mr. Magic Feet, Carnell Lyons.



Tom Brady

Ntongela Masilela, Donald M. Griffith, Donald Jr., and Gayle McKinney (l.-r.), the organizers of the Fountainhead Dance theater.

Mr. Magic Feet gets tribute in historic festival

by Tom Brady

Berlin will play host to a historical event March 3-23 when the Fountainhead Dance Theater sponsors the first Black Cultural Festival, a combination of African and Afro-American dance, theater, music, films and seminar discussions.

"It is the first time African and Afro-American cinema have been shown together at one time on the continent," said Festival co-organizer Ntongela Masilela.

The festival is being divided into three parts. The first part runs from March 3 through 16 and will emphasize theater, music and dance, including a tribute to Carnell Lyons, Mr. Magic Feet, the world-renowned tap dancer. The second part of the festival will present African and Afro-American films and will run from March 16 to 23. The third part involves a series of seminars that will be held at the Hochschule der Künste on March 11.

The prime movers behind the festival are two Black Americans, Donald Griffith and Gail McKinney, the founders of the Fountainhead Dance Theater. The two met in Berlin five years ago when they were invited here by the Theatre des Westens to perform in "Showboat." It was then they decided to stay in Europe, start Fountainhead, and search for people with a "similar mentality."

Both Griffith and McKinney are veteran performers of the New York stage with an impressive number of credits between them. Since they have been in Europe, they have focused their energies on producing, directing, choreographing and teaching. In the words of Donald Griffith, "We became more interested in controlling the creative outflow, from a Black perspective, but more importantly, from a human perspective."

The two of them use Berlin as a base and travel throughout Europe, teaching and choreographing shows. Most recently they were at a ballet seminar in Budapest. "Yes we are in demand," said Gayle McKinney at an

Continued on page 4

Fountainhead Dance Theater

interview in her home that also doubles as a dance studio. "I've traveled all my career and we've developed a network of people throughout Europe and the states who are interested in what we are doing. This is how the festival happened."

The festival is self-financed and helped along with volunteer work—publicity outlets, human resources, materials and translations (the festival's position paper has been translated into German, English, French, Spanish, Turkish and Swahili). Fountainhead applied for a grant with the Berlin Senat to help financing but was turned down. However, the Senat is providing the Theater Manufaktur for performances, but at the rather steep price of a 30 percent cut of the box office proceeds.

"We see it as a historical event," said Griffith. "It is more about achieving something than making money. We'd like to make our statement and interest people in who we are and what we represent."

Adds his wife, "We'd like to involve the American community and expand their horizons outside the military." Gayle says she is involved with the American community and says, "they are interested in what is going on but many times they just don't know."

The founders of Fountainhead see Berlin as an international city with many possibilities in terms of human, academic and artistic resources. The festival will feature many well known performers from the Berlin nightclub scene including Queen Yahnna (who has formed a gospel group for the festival), the Sweat Band, Denise Brooks, and Nokokoye (an acoustical group from Ghana). Also, the festival will premier the play "Zelphia" in English, by Fred Canada.

Griffith discussed some of the goals of the festival. "We want to inform the public of the contributions of black to world civilization and the current contributions of black artists. Also we want to introduce ourselves to the German public. We'd also like to plug into the black Americans that are here."

Griffith met his co-organizer, Dr. Ntongela Masilela, a native of Soweto, South Africa, by accident. Masilela, who has his Ph.D. in sociology from UCLA, was looking for work teaching with the American universities in Berlin when he met Griffith in an U-bahn and asked for

directions. They struck up a conversation and Griffith realized here was a person with a "similar mentality."

Masilela spent the last three years at film school in Nodz, Poland. While at UCLA, he spent a lot of time in the film department.

After receiving his PhD. in sociology, he was offered a position in the film department. He turned it down he says, because after nine years in the states, "I had to go back to Africa, otherwise I'd lose my sense of perspective."

Masilela mentioned that after the films in the festival are shown, the directors will be there to discuss their work. "It will be an educational process for all of us."

He hopes that many different types of people will attend the events at the festival. "Without the support of the people," he said, "this thing will collapse."

Masilela sees the festival as an opportunity for an interchange between cultures. "Our culture has a lot to offer," he said in a telephone interview, "and people can learn from us as much as we can learn from other cultures."

The planners of the black cultural festival see it as an ongoing project. They would like to put it on in Berlin on a yearly basis, but a lot depends on the public response. "They are hoping to attract a mix of people, a cross section of Berlin, as well as build a base among the German population."

The first component of the black cultural festival will run from 3-16 March and be held at the Theatre Manufaktur at Halleschen Ufer 32 (between U-bahn Mockenbrücke and Hallesches Tor). It is a combination of dance, music and theater. The box office numbers are 246-848, 251-0656, 251-0655.

The second component of the festival, the panel discussions, will be held at the Hochschule der Kunst on March 11. The Hochschule der Kunst is located on Hardenbergstr. 33 near the U-bahn Zoologischer Garten.

The third component of the festival, the African and Afro-American films, will be held at the Arsenal Theater and run from 16-23 March. The Arsenal is located at Welsersstr. 25, near the U-bahn Wittenbergplatz. General information about the festival can be obtained by calling 786-3466.

Ein Auszug aus der historischen Entwicklung von Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre und Black International Cinema Berlin 2025 - 1986

Willkommen zu Good Will, Black History 2026 und den kommenden Jahrhunderten, Donald Muldrow Griffith und die fortwährende Unterstützung von ALEX - Offener Kanal Berlin, Checkpoint Charlie Stiftung, Rathaus Schöneberg, der freundlichen und verlässlichen U.S. Army, begleitet von vielen Einzelpersonen, getragen von gewissenhaftem Engagement und konstruktivem Idealismus.

Wir freuen uns, die vielfache Unterstützung dieser Personen und der Organisationen, mit denen sie verbunden sind oder waren, zu würdigen.

2025

40th Black International Cinema Berlin 2025 Jubiläumsausgabe

Thema: PEACE! NOW! ALWAYS! PLEASE! (FRIEDEN! JETZT! IMMER! BITTE!)

Das Black International Cinema Berlin 2025 feierte seine 40. Ausgabe – ein bemerkenswerter Meilenstein für ein Festival, das international für sein langjähriges Engagement für interkulturellen Dialog, gesellschaftliches Bewusstsein und künstlerische Vielfalt anerkannt ist.

Produziert und geleitet von Prof. Donald Muldrow Griffith / Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre, in Verbindung mit The Collegium - Forum & Television Program Berlin, „Footprints in the Sand?“ ExhibitionBerlin und Cultural Zephyr e.V., präsentierte das Festival vom 21.–23. November 2025 im Marlene-Dietrich-Kinosaal im Rathaus Schöneberg Berlin ein vielfältiges Programm aus Filmen, Kunst, Musik und Diskussionen, die sich um Frieden, Menschlichkeit und gegenseitiges Verständnis drehten.

Darüber hinaus wurde das Filmprogramm vom 4. bis 8. und vom 25. bis 29. Dezember 2025 bei ALEX - Offener Kanal Berlin im Fernsehen und per Livestream präsentiert.

Im Rahmen von CrossKultur 2025 und in Kooperation mit ALEX - Offener Kanal Berlin setzt das Black International Cinema Berlin sein langjähriges gemeinnütziges Engagement für die Förderung von Respekt, Inklusion und Kreativität fort.

Mit seinem Thema **Peace! Now! Always! Please!** ruft das Festival zu Empathie, Bewusstsein und Frieden auf – Werte, die in der heutigen herausfordernden Zeit von wesentlicher Bedeutung sind.

Das 40-jährige Jubiläum lädt Publikum, Künstlerinnen und Künstler sowie Filmschaffende ein, gemeinsam zu feiern, zu reflektieren und sich mit neuen und konstruktiven Perspektiven auseinanderzusetzen.

Black International Cinema Berlin 2025 – ein Raum für Begegnung, Inspiration und Hoffnung.

Weitere Informationen finden Sie auf unserer Webseite:

<https://black-international-cinema.com/BIC25/>

1990

Die historische Gründung des Black History Month in Berlin, Deutschland und Europa im Jahr 1990 erfolgte durch die U.S. Army, das Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre, Black International Cinema Berlin und den Flughafen Tempelhof, Berlin.

Der Black History Month in Berlin, Deutschland und Europa wurde historisch durch Initiativen des Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre und Black International Cinema Berlin begründet und im Jahr 1990 von der U.S. Army sowie dem Flughafen Tempelhof unterstützt.

Das Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre und „Space & Times“ wurden von der U.S. Army eingeladen, im Februar 1990 am Flughafen Tempelhof in Berlin ein Tanz- und Fotografieprogramm zur Feier des Black History Month zu produzieren und aufzuführen. „Space & Times“ präsentierte eine Live-Performance, und die begleitende Fotoausstellung zeigte Werke von Lester Sloan (Magazin *Newsweek*) und Robert Golightly Jr. (U.S. Army).

„Space & Times“ und „Crossroads“

Die Tanzkompanie „Space & Times“ wurde 1987 in Berlin von Donald Muldrow Griffith und Gayle McKinney Griffith von Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre ins Leben gerufen und geleitet. Sie bestand aus jungen Menschen im Alter von 15 bis 22 Jahren mit unterschiedlichen kulturellen Ursprüngen und sozioökonomischen Hintergründen. „Space & Times“ konzentrierte sich auf Tänzerinnen und Tänzer der Einstiegs- bis Mittelstufe. Es wurden Original-Choreografien geschaffen, die erstmals in Berlin in bedeutenden Theatern wie dem Hebbel-Theater, der PUMPE (Jugendkulturzentrum) und der Akademie der Künste aufgeführt wurden.

Im Oktober 1989 produzierte, leitete und inszenierte Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre zwei Tanz-Kulturabende mit dem Titel „Crossroads“, mit „Space & Times“, Nana Shineflug und „The Chicago Moving Company“, Chicago Ill./USA, und verschiedenen anderen Künstlerinnen und Künstlern im Hebbel Theater Berlin. Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre wurde vom Bürgermeister von Chicago, Richard Daley, mit einer besonderen Proklamation ausgezeichnet.

Donald Muldrow Griffith von der U.S. Army mit dem „Special Judge’s Award“ ausgezeichnet

Im Jahr 1988 inszenierte, überarbeitete und choreografierte Donald Muldrow Griffith Ntozake Shanges Choreopoem „For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf“ neu. Die Kompanie (Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre) führte das Werk von Oktober bis Dezember 1988 im Amerika Haus und im Berlin Community Theatre auf. Im Unterschied zum Original rückten am Ende der überarbeiteten Fassung Schwarze Frauen und Männer in ihrem gemeinsamen Ringen um eine bessere Beziehung zueinander in einem historisch schwierigen gesellschaftlichen Umfeld näher zusammen. Donald Muldrow Griffith wurde für seine einzigartigen Kreationen mit dem „Special Judge’s Award“ für die beste Choreografie im europaweiten Theaterwettbewerb der U.S. Army ausgezeichnet.

Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek e.V. Berlin

Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek e.V. · Welserstraße 25 · 1000 Berlin 30

An den Senator für
kulturelle Angelegenheiten
Herrn Dr. Volker Hassemer
Europacenter/Tauentzien
1000 Berlin 30

Welserstraße 25
1000 Berlin 30
Telefon (030) 213 60 39
211 17 25 Verleih
24 68 48 Kino Arsenal
2 63 42 42/43 Forum
Telegrammadresse:
Filmforum Berlin

02.04.1986

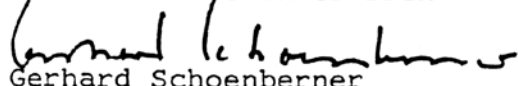
Black Cultural Festival
Filmprogramm im Arsenal

Sehr geehrter Herr Senator Hassemer,

aus Anlass und als Teil des Black Cultural Festival haben die Freunde der deutschen Kinemathek in Zusammenarbeit mit den Veranstaltern, dem in Berlin ansässigen Fountain Head Dance Theater (Direktor: Mr. D. Griffith vom 17. - 23. März im Kino Arsenal ein Filmprogramm veranstaltet, das unseres Wissens zum ersten Mal die Arbeiten afro-amerikanischer und schwarzafrikanischer Filmemacher im Vergleich zeigte.

Die Veranstaltung, die Seminarcharakter hatte, schloss Einführungen zu den Filmen und Diskussionen, aber auch Vortragsveranstaltungen ein. Zu den Referenten gehörten der äthiopische Regisseur Haile Gerima (New York) von dem bereits zwei Filme im internationalen forum liefen, und der Filmwissenschaftler Prof. Dr. Ferid Boughedir (Paris/Tunis), der als Experte des afrikanischen Kinos gelten kann. Seminarleitung und Moderation lagen in den Händen von Mr. Griffith, dessen Umsicht und Geschick viel zu dem Erfolg der Veranstaltungsreihe beigetragen haben. Die gemischte Zusammensetzung des Publikums führte zu einem Nord-Süd-Dialog, wie er bei uns nicht alle Tage stattfindet. Insgesamt handelte es sich um eine förderungswürdige Veranstaltung, deren Fortsetzung, sollte es sie geben, nach meiner Ansicht nach Möglichkeit auch gefördert werden sollte.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen


Gerhard Schoenberger

Anlage: Programm
Kopie: Mr. Griffith

Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek e.V. Berlin

(Friends of the German Cinematheque e.V. Berlin)

Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek • Welserstraße 25 • 1000 Berlin 30

Senator for Cultural Affairs
Dr. Volker Hassemer
Europacenter/Tauentzien
1000 Berlin 30

Welserstraße 25
1000 Berlin 30
Telephone (030) 213 6039
2111725 Distribution
24 68 48 Kino Arsenal
2 634242/43 Forum
Telegram address:
Filmforum Berlin

April 2, 1986

Black Cultural Festival
Film program at Arsenal

Dear Senator Hassemer,

On the occasion of and as part of the Black Cultural Festival, the Friends of the German Cinematheque – in cooperation with the organizers, the Berlin-based Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre (Director: Mr. Donald Griffith) – presented a film program at the Kino Arsenal from March 17 to 23. To our knowledge, this program marked the first time a comparative selection of works by African American and Black African filmmakers has been shown.

The event, which had the character of a seminar, included film introductions and discussions as well as lectures. Among the speakers were the Ethiopian director Haile Gerima (New York), two of whose films have already been shown in the International Forum, and the film scholar Prof. Dr. Ferid Boughedir (Paris/Tunis), who may be regarded as an expert on African cinema. The organization and moderation of the seminar were led by Mr. Griffith, whose prudence and skill contributed greatly to the success of the event series. The diverse composition of the audience fostered a North-South dialogue that is rarely encountered here. Overall, it was an event worthy of support, and in my view, any future continuation should also be supported wherever possible.

Yours sincerely,
Gerhard Schoenberger

Attachment: Program
Copy: Mr. Griffith

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Dr. Carter G. Woodson

Ein Klassiker der Schwarzen Geschichte

Historiker

Geboren 1875 – Gestorben 1950

Ein Pionier der intellektuellen Geschichte der Black Americans.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF NEGRO (Jetzt: African American) LIFE AND HISTORY (ASALH)

Die Vereinigung mit Sitz in der 1538 Ninth Street N.W. war lange Zeit die einzige professionelle Institution, die sich mit der Bewahrung der historischen Überlieferung Schwarzer Menschen im amerikanischen Leben befasste. Pionier und Initiator hinter dieser Organisation war Carter Woodson, ein Gelehrter und Dozent, der 1916 mit der Herausgabe des *Journal of Negro History* begann. Zehn Jahre später rief Woodson die „Negro History Week“ ins Leben, in deren Rahmen führende Persönlichkeiten des Schwarzen Freiheitskampfes – vor allem in Schulen – gewürdigt wurden. Die „Negro History Week“, heute der Black History Month, wird stets im Februar gefeiert, möglichst nahe an den Geburtstagen von Frederick Douglass und Abraham Lincoln.

Viele von Woodsons Büchern bilden die Grundlage für die Forschung späterer Historikerinnen und Historiker. Dazu zählen u. a. *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (1915), *A Century of Negro Migration* (1918), *The History of the Negro Church* (1921), *The Negro in Our History* (1922), *The Rural Negro* (1930) und *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933).

Dr. Carter G. Woodson starb am 3. April 1950 in Washington, D.C.

1986

Historisches Black Cultural Festival

West-Berlin, Deutschland

Das Black International Cinema Berlin hat seine Ursprünge in West-Berlin des Jahres 1986. Damals produzierte und leitete Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre das erste historische, dreiwöchige Black Cultural Festival in Europa. Gegründet und produziert von Prof. Donald Muldrow Griffith, entstand das Festival als Antwort auf gesellschaftliche Herausforderungen und wurde geschaffen, um den Stimmen, Perspektiven und Erfahrungen Schwarzer Menschen und Gemeinschaften Raum zu geben, die im öffentlichen Diskurs häufig übersehen wurden.

Ursprünglich als interdisziplinäres kulturelles Ereignis und Forum für Filmkunst, Austausch und künstlerische Vielfalt konzipiert, bleibt das Festival bis heute interdisziplinär und interkulturell und fördert den Dialog zwischen verschiedenen Gemeinschaften, Ausdrucksformen und Lebensrealitäten. Zugleich dient es als Plattform für transnationale Kulturdiplomatie, die in Begegnung, aufmerksamem Zuhören und gegenseitigem Respekt verwurzelt ist.

Durch die kontinuierliche Arbeit seines Teams – getragen von Idealismus, Engagement und einem starken Verantwortungsbewusstsein – ist das Black International Cinema Berlin zu einem festen und beständigen Bestandteil der Berliner Kulturlandschaft geworden und verkörpert weiterhin sein Leitmotiv: Kunst als Brücke, Begegnung als Fundament.

„...Kunst und Kultur kann hier Brücken bauen, Grenzen überschreiten und sich stereotypischem Schubladendenken entziehen. Deshalb sind Initiativen wie Black International Cinema Berlin wichtig für die Hauptstadt.

Mein Dank geht an die Organisatorinnen und Organisatoren von Black International Cinema Berlin, ein kulturelles Highlight, welches deutschlandweit einmalig ist...“

Gabriele Gün Tank (2010), Integrationsbeauftragte, Bezirk Tempelhof-Schöneberg, Berlin/Deutschland

Vielen Dank und viel Segen für alle!

Immer und ewig!

**FRIEDEN!
JETZT!
IMMER!
BITTE!**

Mottos:

“I may not make it if I try, but I damn sure won't if I don't...” - Oscar Brown Jr.

“Mankind will either find a way or make one.” - C.P. Snow

“Whatever you do..., be cool!” - Joseph Louis Turner

“Yes, I can...!” - Sammy Davis Jr.

“Yes, We can...!” - Barack Hussein Obama

“Yes, we can and Yes, we better...!” - Barack Hussein Obama and Donald Muldrow Griffith

Recherche und Text: Prof. Donald Muldrow Griffith

Gründer/Produzent/Leiter/Publizist/Kurator/Film- & TV-Regisseur/Moderator/Autor/Choreograf

Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre/Black International Cinema Berlin/THE COLLEGIUM - Forum & Television

Program Berlin/„Footprints in the Sand?“ ExhibitionBerlin/Cultural Zephyr e.V.

Berlin, Deutschland, 12. Februar 2026

LERNEN, LEBEN, LIEBEN, VORANSCHREITEN,

Immer und Gemeinsam!

Mutige Initiative mit vielen Höhepunkten

Als Carnell Lyons über die Bühne klackerte...

Mit einem Wiederholungskonzert von Queen Yhna und einer Gospelformation, mit dem die stimmgewaltige schwarze Lady die Zuschauer von dieser Seite ihrer Qualitäten überzeugte, und mit der Musicalrevue „Mister Magic Feet – A Salute to Carnell Lyons“ ging am Sonntag der Musik- und Theaterteil des „Black Cultural Festival“ in der Theatermanufaktur zu Ende.

Es ist schon beeindruckend, was die Organisatoren an interessanten Künstlern für diese Veranstaltungsreihe zusammengestellt haben. Ähnlich breit, wie in der Zusammenstellung des Programms der Begriff „Schwarze Kultur“ die Einbeziehung afrikanischer, US-amerikanischer oder hier lebender Künstler (wie z. B. beim wunderschönen Blueskonzert der Türkin Özay und des New Yorker Pianisten Curtis Black), die Stilrichtungen Gospel, Folklore, Rock, Jazz, Reggae oder deren gegenseitige Durchdringung beinhaltet, sieht auch Veranstalter Donald M. Griffith seinen Anspruch hinsichtlich seiner kulturellen und politischen Ziele des Festivals. So identifiziert er sich am ehesten mit dem schwarzen Bürgerrechtler Jesse Jackson, der seiner Meinung nach „auf Veränderungen in den Köpfen und Herzen der Menschen“ abzielt. Griffith will schwarze Kultur und Selbstbewußtsein fördern, zeigen, „daß wir die Verantwortung übernehmen müssen, die Dinge zu ändern, und daß wir fähig sein müssen, als Schwarze „am Tisch des Lebens Platz zu nehmen und dort Entscheidungen zu treffen“.

Letzteres bezog er insbesondere auch auf die Teilnahme des ANC-Vertreters Dr. Ben Motlathe an einer Veranstal-

tung im Rahmen des Festivals. Die grundsätzlichen Ziele des ANC, so Griffith, würden bei ihrer Durchsetzung auch die Probleme „vieler weißer Leute“ lösen.

Aber zurück zu einigen weiteren „Einzelheiten“ des Veranstaltungsprogramms. Da war das spätabendliche Konzert von Özay und Curtis Clark am Piano: Ein sanfter, leiser, unter die Haut gehender Abend, getragen von der ausdrucksstarken sensiblen Bluesstimme der türkischen Sängerin und von dem virtuellen Spiel des schwarzen New Yorker Pianisten, der beileibe nicht als Begleitung am Klavier agierte, sondern mit eigenen Parts, spannenden Improvisationen und einer wunderschön ausgespielten Ballade gemeinsam mit und neben Özay diese Darbietung bestritt. Özay singt schwarzen City-Blues. Sie



Mr. Magic Feet – Carnell Lyons, der Mann mit den schnellen Füßen in Aktion

präsentierte an diesem Abend vor allem Liebeslieder, Poesie und Realität bestimmen die Textauswahl.

Dann die Musicalrevue „Mr. Magic Feet – A Salute to Carnell Lyons“. Die Begegnung mit dem inzwischen 68jährigen Altmeister des Steppdance hat Griffith und seine Frau, die ursprünglich ein Buch über den jetzt als Tanzlehrer in Hamburg lebenden baumlangen schwarzen Showman schreiben wollten, mit zu diesem Festival inspiriert. So verstand sich das Programm, in dem sich Tanz-, Gesangs- und Shownummern entlang der musikalischen Karriere von Lyons entwickelten – nicht ohne witzige Einlagen und teilweise ironische Distanz zum Showbusiness –, als Würdigung Carnell Lyons, der Partner von Musikern wie Count Basie, Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington oder Benny Goodman war.

In der Show traten Queen Yhna, „The Three Flappers“, Meisterschüler von Carnell Lyons, und die „Gerard Barya Band“ auf. Lyons wurde vom diesmal sehr zahlreichen Publikum mit brausem Applaus begrüßt. Er erzählte von seiner Entwicklung als „tapdancer“ (Steptänzer), aber auch davon, daß er mit seiner Gruppe in der Rezession der 30er Jahre „verdammte froh“ war, überhaupt Arbeit zu haben, als „nach dem freien Job mindestens 200 Leute anstanden“. Und – natürlich – der Meister legte auch eine heiße Sohle hin: Manch einem wurde dabei vom Zusehen fast schwindelig, unglaublich, wie der 68jährige locker über die Plattform klackerte, seine eigene Musik mit den Füßen tanzend. Viel Applaus für diese klug zusammengestellte Show.



Einer der Höhepunkte des Festivals insgesamt (wir berichteten bereits) war das Gesangs-, Musik- und Tanzensemble „Kalifi“ aus Ghana – sympathische Botschafter der Kultur ihres Landes

Fotos: Bugdoll

Am gleichen Abend wirbelte auch der in Westberlin lebende Boubacar Jamme aus Gambia mit seiner Band über die Bühne. Harte ekstatische Trommelrhythmen kennzeichnen die Musik von Boubacar, er selbst spielt Gitarre und singt. Dabei sind die gutturalen Scatpassagen wohl das Herausragende an seiner Musik – sie könnten selbst Al Jarreau neidvoll erblassen lassen. Aber was Boubacar ansonsten unter dem Etikett „Authentic Mancinka Beats from the Gambia“ verkauft, muß größtenteils als eine nicht sehr gelungene Mischung charakterisiert werden. Peinlich wirkte auch sein Auftritt mit Baströckchen und einer Art Kardinalsmitze – halb in Touristenbelustigungsmanier, halb als selbst-ernannter Medizinmann.

Insgesamt gab es zwar einige weniger gelungene Auftritte im Rahmen des Black Cultural Festivals, aber als Fazit doch viele kleine und größere Höhepunkte. Die Veranstaltungsreihe und die Initiative zu diesem Festival sind ein mutiger und in dieser Form erstmaliger Versuch, in unserer Stadt Breite und Aspekte „schwarzer Kultur“ auszu-leuchten. Das Festival wird fortgesetzt mit einer Filmreihe im Arsenal, über die wir noch gesondert berichten werden.

Helga BUGDOLL

Die Wahrheit (The Truth)

CULTURE

"Black Cultural Festival" at the Theatermanufaktur

A Bold Initiative with Many Highlights

When Carnell Lyons clicked across the stage ...

With a repeat concert by Queen Yahna and a gospel formation – in which the powerful-voiced Black singer once again impressed the audience with this aspect of her talent – and with the musical revue "Mister Magic Feet – A Salute to Carnell Lyons," the music and theatre section of the "Black Cultural Festival" at the Theatermanufaktur came to an end on Sunday.

It is quite impressive what the organizers have brought together in terms of interesting artists for this series of events. Just as broadly as the term "Black culture" is reflected in the program – encompassing African, American, and locally based artists (such as in the wonderful blues concert by the Turkish singer Özay and New York pianist Curtis Clark), as well as styles like gospel, folklore, rock, jazz, reggae, and their mutual interweaving – so too does organizer Donald M. Griffith define his aspirations regarding the festival's cultural and political aims. He most closely identifies with Black civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, who, in his view, seeks to bring about "changes in the minds and hearts of people." Griffith aims to promote Black culture and self-confidence, to demonstrate "that we must take responsibility to change things, and that we must be capable, as Black people, of taking a seat at the table of life and making decisions there."

This also particularly referred to the participation of ANC representative Dr. Ben Mhlathe in a festival event. According to Griffith, the fundamental goals of the ANC would, in their realization, also solve the problems of "many white people."

But back to some further "details" of the program. There was the late-night concert by Özay and Curtis Clark on piano – an evening gentle, quiet, and deeply moving, carried by the expressive and sensitive blues voice of the Turkish singer and the virtuosic playing of the Black New York pianist, who by no means acted merely as accompaniment but contributed his own parts, engaging improvisations, and a beautifully developed ballad performed together with and alongside Özay. She presented primarily love songs that evening; poetry and reality shaped the selection of texts.

Then the musical revue “Mr. Magic Feet – A Salute to Carnell Lyons.” The encounter with the now 68-year-old master of tap dance inspired Griffith and his wife – who had originally intended to write a book about the tall Black showman now living in Hamburg as a dance teacher – to help bring this festival into being. Thus, the program – featuring dance, song, and show numbers developed along the course of Lyons’ musical career, not without humorous interludes and at times an ironic distance from show business – stood as a tribute to Carnell Lyons, who had performed alongside musicians such as Count Basie, Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington, and Benny Goodman.

The show featured Queen Yahna, “The Three Flappers,” master students of Carnell Lyons, and the “Gerard Batra Band.” Lyons was welcomed by the large audience with thunderous applause. He spoke about his development as a tap dancer, but also about how, during the recession of the 1930s, he and his group were “damn grateful” to have work at all, when “for every job available, at least 200 people were waiting.” And – of course – the master himself took the stage. Watching him, one could almost become dizzy: it was incredible how the 68-year-old clicked effortlessly across the platform, creating his own music with his feet. Much applause for this thoughtfully assembled show.

On the same evening, Boubacar Jammeh from Gambia, living in West Berlin, also swept across the stage with his band. Powerful, ecstatic drum rhythms characterize Boubacar’s music; he himself plays guitar and sings. The guttural scat singing is perhaps the most striking aspect of his performance – it could even make Al Jarreau pale with envy. However, what Boubacar otherwise presents under the label “Authentic Mandinka Beats from The Gambia” must largely be described as a not entirely successful mixture. His appearance in a raffia skirt and a kind of cardinal’s hat also came across as somewhat awkward – half in the style of entertaining tourists, half as a self-styled medicine man.

All in all, there were a few less successful performances within the Black Cultural Festival, but the overall conclusion is one of many small and large highlights. This series of events and the initiative behind the festival represent a bold and, in this form, first-time attempt to illuminate the breadth and dimensions of Black culture in our city. The festival will continue with a film series at Arsenal, which we will report on separately.

Helga BUGDOLL

Caption 1: Mr. Magic Feet – Carnell Lyons, the man with the fast feet in action.

Caption 2: One of the overall highlights of the festival (as previously reported) was the vocal, music, and dance ensemble “Kalifi” from Ghana – engaging ambassadors of their country’s culture.

Photos: Bugdoll



Black Cultural Festival 1986, March 3-23, Berlin/Germany

Production and Direction: Prof. Donald Muldrow Griffith/Fountainhead® Tanz Théâtre

Finale: "Mister Magic Feet - A Salute to Carnell Lyons", Theatermanufaktur am Halleschen Ufer, Berlin/Germany

left to right: Roland E. Wendler, Kathleen Gallego Zapata, Zakaria A. Hassen, Nicole Frühauf,
Alton Lathrop, Carnell Lyons, Evelyn Vetter (behind Carnell Lyons), Silke Samel, Queen Yahna, David Lane

“ Martin Luther King Jr. ”

Gwendolyn Brooks

A man went forth with gifts.

He was a prose poem.

He was a tragic grace.

He was a warm music.

He tried to heal the vivid volcanoes.

His ashes are
reading the world.

His Dream still wishes to anoint
the barricades of faith and of control.

His word still burns the center of the sun,
above the thousands and the
hundred thousands.

The word was Justice. It was spoken.

So it shall be spoken.

So it shall be done.

The Poetry of Black America - Anthology of the 20th Century

Edited by Arnold Adoff, Introduction by Gwendolyn Brooks

Harper & Row, 1973



*The President of the United States and Mrs. Ronald Reagan
and the American Community in Berlin*

Cordially invite Mr. Griffith & Mrs. McKinney

*to an American Birthday Party for Berlin
on the Occasion of the City's 750th Anniversary
at the Main Terminal Building of Tempelhof Central Airport
on Friday, 12 June 1987, 12.30 - 17.00 hours.*

*Casual Dress/Freizeitkleidung
Entrance/Eingang:
Platz der Luftbrücke*

*RJVP on the enclosed card by
5 June 1987
Antwort erbeten auf beiliegender
Karte bis zum 5. Juni 1987*



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. COMMAND, BERLIN, and U.S. ARMY, BERLIN
APO NEW YORK 09742-

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

AEBA-GA-CR

18 March 1988

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter is to introduce and recommend an extraordinary member of the staff of Community Recreation Division, Mr. Donald Griffith.

Mr. Griffith has served as Music Specialist with the Community Recreation Division since 6 June 1986. During his two years of service Mr. Griffith has been instrumental in accomplishing the upgrade of musical services and equipment as well as in establishing a viable program in black theatrical experience for the Berlin American Community. His interests in teaching and working with three persons involved in amateur theatrical pursuits has resulted in many expressions of gratitude from various elements of the command.

Before coming to the present position Donald M. Griffith was active in both the American and German theatrical and dance world, having been a successful actor and dancer himself. Together with his wife he was instrumental in forming a new theatrical endeavour "Fountainhead Tanz Theater" in Berlin, which highlighted the international black cultural experience through programs of theatre music and dance in a multi media environment "Black Cultural Festival" and "Black International Cinema" two programs presented by Mr. Griffith as part of the professional entertainment menu in the city of Berlin have been especially rewarding as examples of the educational process of the audience to the special talents and styles of the black peoples of the world.

Mr. Griffith's talents are matched only by his enthusiasm for sharing those talents with the participants. It has been a pleasure to have his presence on the staff of the Entertainment Branch, Community Recreation Division.

Elizabeth A. Welsh
ELIZABETH A. WELSH
Chief, Entertainment Branch