

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

The Aftershock, 50 Years After the Watts Riots

Phantom Street Artist · Wednesday, July 22nd, 2015

Fifty years ago, in August of 1965, the black neighborhood of Watts in Los Angeles erupted in flames and violence, which followed an incident of systemic police abuse. In honor of that historical moment in time, and of the LA Riots of 1992, Grand Performances hosted a free summer concert series titled Aftershock. The series aims to address the ongoing racial and social struggles that persist, despite laws that prohibit racial discrimination, calling into question and challenging black youth identity in the wake of intersecting political struggles emerging in relation to race, gender and social class in the hip – hop generation.



WATTS 50, the second in the *Aftershock* four part musical act, was held July 10th, 2015 at Grand Performances stage. On this summer night, featured performances by notable acts such as Dead Prez, The Watts Prophets, Ill Camille, Food4Thot, and Jimetta Rose moved the audience to their feet. There were also featured broadcasters, including Dave Lopez (CBS), Beverly White (NBCLA), and Margaret Prescod from (KPFFK), to speak about historic events throughout the show. Lyricist Lounge co-founder Ant Marshall served as the host.

Grand Performances, Director of Programming, Leigh Ann Hahn states that this event was for true fans, reminding us that hip hop can play a role in helping to remember our history and inspire social change.

Aftershock serves to bridge socio-political divides by formulating creative, collaborative musical projects.

This unique model serves as a vehicle in which two seemingly different groups can work jointly to promote peace and social justice, which is so sorely needed in today's media. In addition to covering social and cultural topics, this musical programming examines, challenges, and opens up a dialogue in which it encourages its audience to promote harmony and diversity.

Remaining shows in the *Aftershock* series include an examination of race and the criminal justice system in *The Last Jimmy: A Hip Hop Musical* by Dice Raw (July 17 – a West Coast debut). July 25, 2015 will feature *The Rhythm Changes but the Struggle Remains*, an exploration of jazz, hip hop, and politics orchestrated by L.A.'s own Kamasi Washington.

For additional information about the Aftershock series or of other events hosted by Grand Performances visit www.grandperformances.org

ABOUT GRAND PERFORMANCES

Located in the center of Downtown Los Angeles, Grand Performances has earned high praise for their Outdoor Summer Concert Series hosting concerts that have become synonymous with high-quality music, dance and theatre for the past 28 years.

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