

Afeni Shakur In Her Defense - World Premiere and Exhibition

Written by Robert ID4135

Thursday, 17 January 2008 11:40 -

TASCA (Tupac Amaru Center for the Arts), named after the hip hop icon Tupac Shakur (2Pac), proudly announces a pair of artistic offerings entitled Afeni Shakur: In Her Defense, detailing Afeni Shakur's arrest as a member of the Black Panthers, and culminates in her acquittal on all 156 felony charges in the Trial of the Panther 21.

The first part of the multimedia experience known as In Her Defense, is a gallery exhibition (February 1 - March 28, 2008) highlighting the events as they unfolded over the course of two years (1969 -1971), in which a courageous young woman defended herself against an over-zealous court system. The play, In Her Defense premieres February 22nd, and brings to life the events in a more interactive form; the two artistic endeavors aim to shed light on the power of one woman to overcome insurmountable obstacles in her quest for freedom.

In 1969, Afeni Shakur was arrested alongside other members of the renegade civil rights activist group the Black Panthers. The group was arraigned on over 156 differing charges associated with conspiring to destroy New York City department stores, subway stations, and police stations. At the time of her arrest, Afeni Shakur waived her rights to a lawyer, opting to serve as her own legal counsel.

Known as The Trial of the Panther 21, the case captured the nation's headlines, and would hold the distinction at the time, of being the longest and most expensive political trial in the state of New York. Over the course of two years, Afeni Shakur would be incarcerated while awaiting her trial, released on bail numerous times, only to return to her jail cell carrying an unborn child.

Afeni Shakur would ultimately prevail against the legal system, acquitted of all charges just over a month before the birth of her son ... who the world would know as hip hop icon, poet, activist and actor Tupac Amaru Shakur (2Pac).

On display from February 1 - March 28, 2007, In Her Defense the gallery installation is a collection of photographs, court transcripts, and television news footage documenting the courtroom drama.

Amassed from numerous primary sources, including Afeni Shakur's own private collection, the

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documents include portions of the oral transcripts from the trial - her opening and closing arguments. The exhibit also features original television news coverage (from 1969-1971) anchored by CBS' Walter Cronkite, among other broadcast journalists.

Providing the elegance only afforded in theater, In Her Defense the short play dramatizes the historical events in three scenes. Using the court transcripts, supplemented by a fictional account of Afeni Shakur's time behind bars, the play is a one-woman show supplemented by Pac's Kids performers in the roles of the other co-defendants.

In Her Defense is not just a reflection on Afeni Shakur's struggle, but a celebration of the enduring strength of the human spirit. Documenting an important time in the African American experience and the civil rights movement, it seems natural to open the gallery exhibit on the first day of Black History Month. Additionally, the exhibit continues through the end of March, to encompass Women's History Month and commemorate the conviction of one glorious woman.

The gallery exhibit is free and open to the general public. Admission to the play is \$15 for adults and \$10 for students. Both the Play and Exhibit will be at the Tupac Amaru Shakur Center for the Arts (TASCA), located at 5616 Memorial Drive, Stone Mountain, GA 30083.

Afeni Shakur: In Her Defense Dates To Remember

In Her Defense: The Gallery Exhibit - February 1 - March 28, 2008

Exhibit Opening Night Reception - February 1, 2008

In Her Defense: The Play - Feb. 22 - 23; Feb. 29 - Mar. 1;

Mar. 7-8; all performances begin at 7:30pm

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Play Opening Night Reception - February, 22, 2008

Art and Music Series Night - March 7, 2008

To pre-order tickets, please contact Yvette Horton or Tre" Maxie at 404-298-4222 or by email at TASF0671@aol.com .

Visit www.TASF.org for more info

About TASCA (Tupac Amaru Center for the Arts):

The Tupac Amaru Shakur Center for the Performing Arts is just outside Atlanta in Stone Mountain, Georgia. The Center is dedicated to providing students, ages 12-18, with educational programs in the performing arts. It is a fact early arts education improves school performance, as well as offer invaluable life lessons while building self esteem and confidence. For nearly 10 years, the Center's programs have served youth of all social and economic backgrounds, giving countless young people the courage to get off the streets and learn vital skills that have the potential to positively impact their communities.